



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

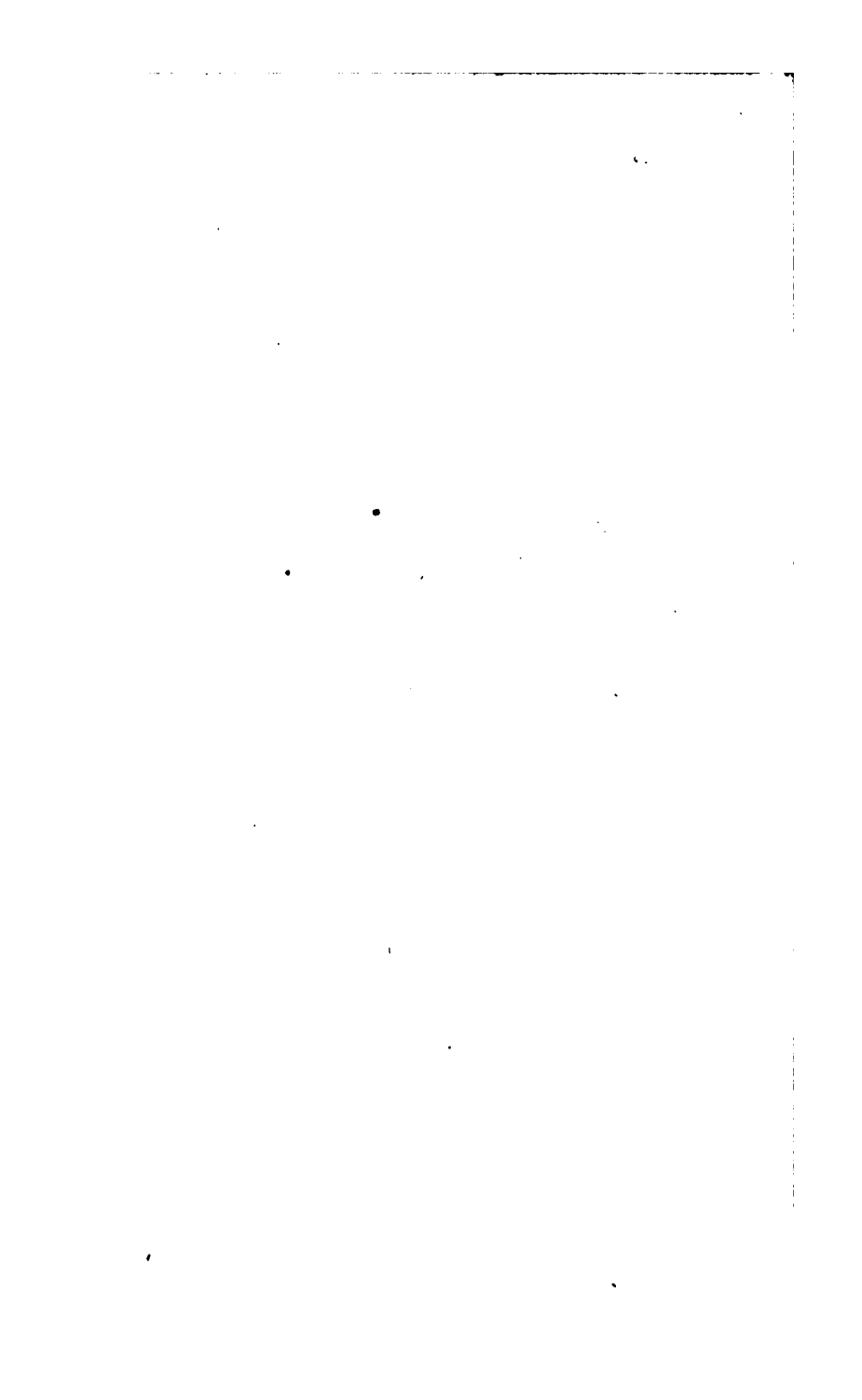
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



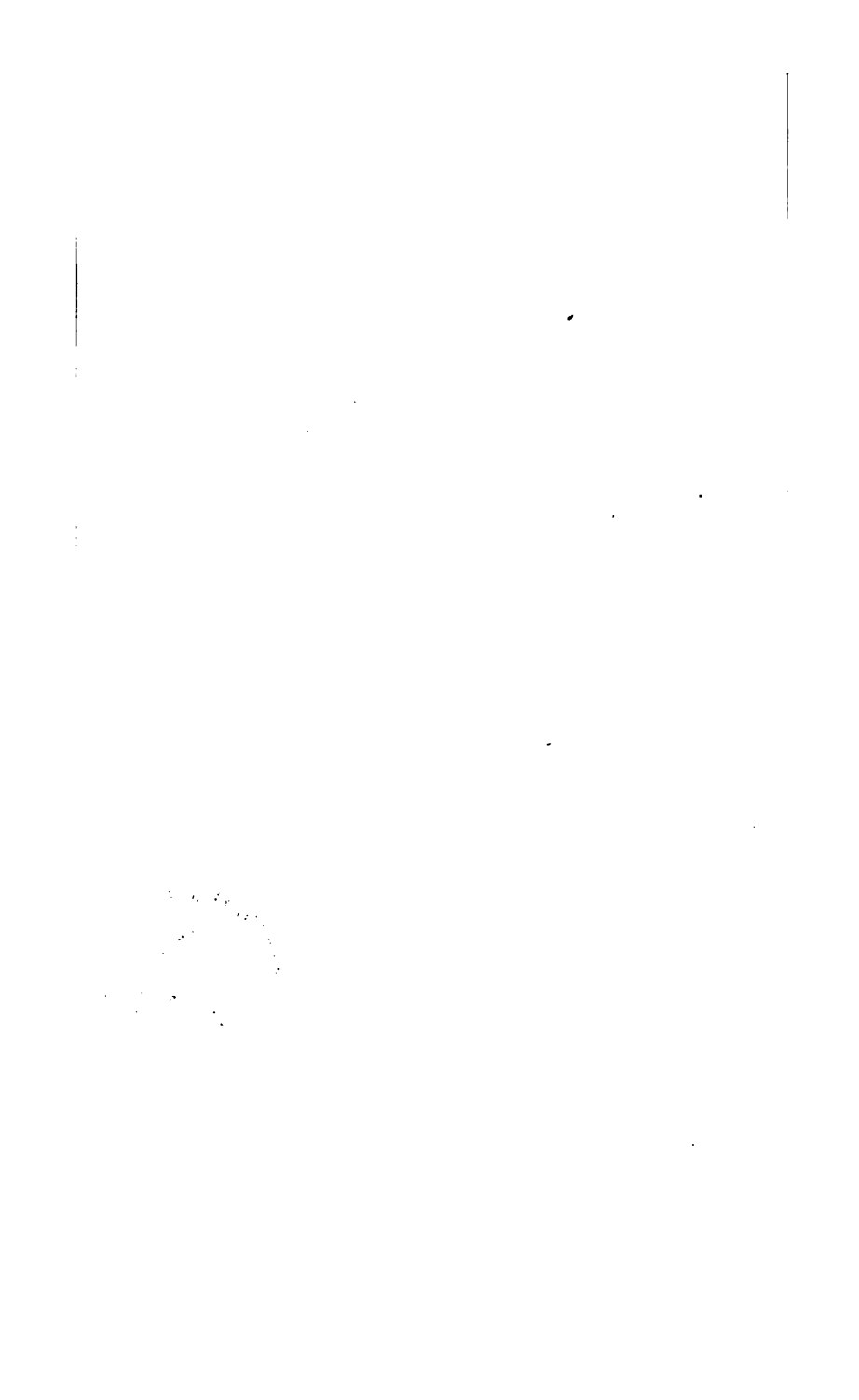
38.

436.









HELP TO THE READING

OF

THE BIBLE.

BY

BENJAMIN ELLIOTT NICHOLLS, M.A.

OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

CURATE OF ST. JOHN'S, WALTHAMSTOW,

AUTHOR OF SUNDAY EXERCISES ON THE MORNING AND EVENING
SERVICES OF THE CHURCH.

"Search the Scriptures."—JOHN v. 39.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD,

AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL.

1838.

436.



LONDON:
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1

CHAPTER I.

DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE ILLUSTRATED BY	
Its remarkable preservation	3
Its moral effects.....	6
The agreement of its several parts	8
The spirit of the writers.....	11
Miracles, and fulfilment of prophecy	17

CHAPTER II.

PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE BIBLE WAS GIVEN.....	33
Ignorance of mankind without the Bible	ib.
God's great design in the gift of the Bible	34

CHAPTER III.

THE GREAT TRUTHS OF THE BIBLE GRADUALLY REVEALED, VIZ.	39
Nature and attributes of God	40
Character and prospects of man	44
The great work of man's redemption	48

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE RIGHT INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE.....	54
Terms used in speaking of God	ib.
Application to ourselves of Scripture examples	57
Interpretation of Doctrines, promises, &c.	58
Prophecy	63
Types	67
Parables	68
Importance of comparing Scripture with Scripture	72
Words used in different senses.....	77
Importance of attending to proper names	80
Value of some knowledge of geography	83
natural history	90
chronology	92
profane history.....	95
Manners and customs of eastern nations	98
Difficulties and seeming contradictions of the Bible.....	105
Quotations illustrating the leading object of this chapter.....	107

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER V.

	PAGE
ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE JEWS.....	111
Its distinguishing feature	112
Spirit of their laws	113
The Sabbatical Year, and the Jubilee, as illustrating their government and laws.....	117

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF THE JEWS.....	120
Its distinguishing feature	ib.
Persons conducting it	122
Places where it was conducted	124
Seasons when conducted.....	127

CHAPTER VII.

SOME ACCOUNT OF JEWISH SECTS, AND OF OTHER ORDERS OF MEN MENTIONED IN SCRIPTURE.....	132
Scribes, Lawyers, Doctors of the Law	133
Pharisees	134
Sadducees	ib.
Essenes	135
Nazarites	ib.
Herodians	136
Galileans	ib.
Publicans	ib.
Proselytes	137
Samaritans	ib.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.....	138
NEW TESTAMENT.....	222
Chronological Index of the Bible	270
Chronological Table of the Books of the New Testament ...	274
Prayers	275
Hymn	276
Index	278

HELP

TO THE

READING OF THE BIBLE.

INTRODUCTION.

“ Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”—1 PET. iii. 15.

THE reader will find in the following pages a series of notes, rather than a full and detailed account of such knowledge as may be required for a profitable study of the Scriptures. The object of the author has been merely to give such a view of the Sacred Volume, as shall, through the Divine blessing, awaken a desire to “ search the Scriptures” (John v. 39; Acts xvii. 11), and assist those who may be making a first effort to do so.

The practical benefit to be derived from the Holy Scriptures depends upon the disposition of mind in which we read them. Under this conviction the general plan pursued has been,—

First, *To remind the reader of the Divine authority of the Bible, by slightly noticing some of the evidences on which it is proved to be the word of God.*

Having thus shown the state of mind in which the Sacred Volume should be approached, as the word not of men, but of God, the object of the writer has been to explain,

Secondly, *The purpose for which the Bible was given to mankind; as also,*

Thirdly, *The manner in which that purpose has been fulfilled.* Some general remarks will then be given,

Fourthly, *On the interpretation of the Bible.*

The Jews were the people through whom God communi-

cated his will to man. This consideration has suggested the propriety of giving a slight sketch,

Fifthly, *Of the government, the worship, and the different sects, &c. of the Hebrew people.*

After this has been added,

Sixthly, *A short account of the several books of the Old and New Testament, with such a notice of their contents as will in some measure illustrate the previous remarks.*

The use which has been made of the *Sunday Exercises on the Morning and Evening Services of the Church* has suggested the attempt to form what may be used as a Sunday Exercise on the Bible. This being the author's object, will offer some apology for the number and abruptness of the references to Scripture. To those who may use it as an exercise for the instruction of the young, it is strongly recommended that the substance of each section should be reduced to questions, and written answers required. A few questions have been given; but to have pursued this further would have increased too much the size of the volume.

Bishop Horne remarks: "When we study the writings of men, it is well if, after much pains and labour, we find some particles of truth amongst a great deal of error: when we read the *Scriptures*, all we meet with is truth. In the former case we are like the Africans on the Gold Coast; of whom it is said that they dig pits nigh the water-falls of mountains abounding in gold; then, with incredible pains and industry, wash off the sand till they espy at the bottom two or three shining grains of metal, which only just pay their labour. In the latter case we work in a mine sufficient to enrich ourselves and all about us."—The object of this work is to draw the reader to this mine, and just to loosen its surface for him.

Bishop Jewel says: "The Scriptures are manna given to us from Heaven, to feed us in the desert of this world." The author can truly state, that his heart's desire and prayer to God is, that by his humble efforts these Scriptures may be endeared to the reader; that being led to partake of the Bread of Life, he may eat and live for ever. (John vi. 31, &c. 47, &c. with Col. iii. 16; John xvi. 13.)

CHAP. I.

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *The Preservation of the Bible.* § ii. *The Moral Effects of the Bible.* § iii. *The Agreement of all the Parts with each other.* § iv. *The Spirit of the Writers.* § v. *Miracles and Prophecy proving it to be the Word of God.*

WHAT IS THE BIBLE? This seems naturally the first inquiry which suggests itself as an introduction to the study of the Bible. And for this reason—because the answer at once directs us to the *disposition of mind* in which it should be read; and our right use, and even our understanding, of the Sacred Volume, entirely depends on the disposition in which we read it. (Dan. xii. 10; see also Isa. xxix. 13, 14; Matt. vi. 23. xi. 25. xiii. 11, 12; John iii. 19. v. 44; 1 Cor. ii. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 13.)

These texts are given by Bishop Butler on this subject; *Analogy*, Part ii. page 321.

The Bible is the word of God, and this solemn thought should be ever present to the mind when we read it. It is not, however, the object of this chapter to enter into any detailed proof of the Divine authority of the Bible, but only to remind the reader of some of those remarkable circumstances, which distinguish it as such from all other books. Among these, may be noticed what (till the attention had been drawn a little to the subject) might not appear so; namely, first, its *Preservation*.

§ i. *The Preservation of the Bible.*

1. *The Bible is the oldest book in the world*; the first part of it, which is the foundation upon which all the others rest, having been written 3300 years ago; that is to say, nearly 1000 years earlier than the date of any other history which we have.

Herodotus and Thucydides, the oldest profane historians whose writings have reached our times, were contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah, the last of the historians of the

Old Testament. Between them and Moses, the writer of the first five books of the Bible, there is an interval of nearly 1000 years. The Poems of Homer and Hesiod are somewhat more ancient than Herodotus, but they are nearly 600 years after Moses.

And it is the more remarkable that the Bible should be the oldest book in the world, from these two considerations :—

(1.) The Jews, who had the care of these books, were, at different periods of their history, a very despised and oppressed people. (See an account of their treatment from the Midianites, Judges vi. 2; also from the Philistines, 1 Sam. xiii. 20; from the Syrians, 2 Kings xiii. 7; the Egyptians, 2 Chron. xii. 2—9; and particularly from the Assyrians, 2 Kings xvii. 6; and the Chaldeans, 2 Kings xxiv. xxv. 2 Chron. xxxvi. Jer. lii.)

During their captivity in Babylon, their temple having been burnt, the very ark in which the original copy of the Law was kept (Deut. xxxi. 26), and every glory of the Jewish worship perished, and their city laid waste for more than a hundred years. Antiochus Epiphanes, when he took Jerusalem, murdered about 40,000 of its inhabitants, sold as many more to be slaves, and ordered, that whoever was found with the Book of the Law should be put to death; and every book that could be found was burnt. (1 Maccab. i. 56, 57.)

(2.) The Jews themselves were tempted, by their continual disobedience, to a frequent disregard of their own Scriptures. (See Deut. xxxi. 29, verified by all their subsequent history. Neh. ix.)

Their constant disposition to idolatry before the Babylonish captivity was calculated, humanly speaking, to endanger the safety of the Sacred Volume. Jezebel, the wife of a king of Israel, attempted the utter destruction of the prophets of the Lord (1 Kings xviii. 4), and with them, as a necessary consequence, of the Sacred Books; and so far, indeed, did these and similar (Matt. xxiii. 34) attempts succeed, that in a subsequent period of their history, Josiah, a pious king of Judah, and Hilkiah, the high priest, were destitute of an authentic copy of the Scriptures, until the latter found it in the house of the Lord. (2 Kings xxii.; 2 Chron. xxiv.)

Under these circumstances, is it not remarkable that this Book of the Jews should have been preserved; and that not a single book of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Phœnicians, (the most flourishing and civilized nations which lived at the same time with them,) has reached us?

2. *The Bible has been preserved unaltered.*

As to that part of the Bible written *before* the coming of our blessed Lord, called the Old Testament, we know

(1.) That a copy of the Five Books of Moses, called the *Pentateuch*, was made by the Samaritans, who, after the Babylonish captivity (more than 500 years before Christ), became the rooted enemies of the Jews. (Ezra iv. 1, 4; John iv. 9; viii. 48.)

(2.) That nearly 300 years before Christ, by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, a translation was made, and widely circulated, of the whole of the Old Testament into Greek, the language then most generally understood.

(3.) That, on comparing this Hebrew Samaritan *Pentateuch*, and this Greek translation, called the *Septuagint*, they substantially agree with each other and with our Bible.

(4.) But the strongest proof that the Old Testament is unaltered is, that our Lord declared the Old Testament (as the Jews possessed it in his time) to be the word of God (Mark vii. 13). He adopted (Luke xxiv. 44) that threefold division of it, as the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, in which the Jews comprehend all the Old Testament as we now have it. Our Lord frequently charges the Jews with making the word of God of none effect by their traditions, but never of corrupting the text.

As to that part of the Bible written *after* the coming of our Lord, called the New Testament, we know

(1.) That it was very widely circulated, and that therefore no alteration could be made without its being known: for before the middle of the second century, the greater part of the different books of which it is composed were read in every Christian assembly throughout the world.

(2.) That these writings were held in highest reverence, were received as a Divine rule of faith and conduct—received as such, to the rejection of many others pretending to revelation, and even to the rejection of those written by eminent Christians, as the Epistle of Clement, &c.—received

as Divine by those who were called to lay down their lives in attestation of their belief, and who, therefore, would exercise the greatest jealousy over the preservation of those writings unaltered.

(3.) That very ancient manuscripts of the New Testament are extant, which, though made in different countries at a vast distance from each other, differ very little.

(4.) That, as before the coming of our Lord, the enmity of the Jews and the Samaritans was overruled to the *preservation of the Bible unaltered*, so since His advent, the enmity of Jews and Christians, and the divisions of Christians amongst each other, have been overruled to the same great end. No alteration could be made by one sect, either in the Old or New Testament, without the detection of such alteration by some other sect (Ps. lxxvi. 10).*

"Cities fall, kingdoms come to nothing, empires fade away as the smoke. Where is Numa, Minos, Lycurgus? where are their books? what is become of their laws?" But that this Book "no tyrant," as Bishop Jewel remarks, "should have been able to consume, no tradition to choke, no heretic maliciously to corrupt;" that it should stand unto this day, amid the wreck of all that is human, without altering or changing one sentence so as to change the doctrine taught therein; surely, here is a very singular providence attending it, claiming our attention in a very remarkable manner. (1 Pet. i. 24, 25; Prov. xxi. 30; Matt. xxiv. 35.)

§ ii. *The Moral Effects of the Bible.*

As the Bible is the most ancient book, so is it the *most influential on the heart*; not only changing men's opinions,

* The preceding remarks do not apply to the Apocrypha, which is sometimes bound up with the Bible, but is no part of the canon of Scripture. The last council of Trent, held in the year 1550, under Pope Pius IV. presumed to call it so; but it was never considered as sacred by the Jews, was never alluded to by our Lord or his Apostles, and is not in the catalogue of Sacred Books given by the fathers during the first four centuries: so that, as Bishop Burnet says, we have the concurrent sense of the whole Church, on the matter. The apocryphal books were read in the Church after the fourth century; but Jerome expressly informs us, "they were read for example of life, and instruction of manners, but were not applied to establish any doctrine," plainly implying they had no Divine authority. (See the 6th Article of the Church of England.)

but producing a total alteration of character, of their principles, motives, and conduct.

St. Paul relates what occurred at Corinth (1 Cor. vi. 10, 11), and St. Peter what effect was produced in Pontus, Galatia, and other places (1 Pet. iv. 3) nearly 1800 years ago.

Justin the martyr, who was educated a heathen philosopher, and flourished about the middle of the second century, in his celebrated Apology, presented to the emperor Trajan, says, "We, who formerly delighted in adultery, now observe the strictest chastity; we, who used the charms of magic, have devoted ourselves to the true God; and we, who valued money and gain above all things, now cast what we have in common, and distribute to every man according to his necessities."

Tertullian, an African, born at Carthage, who lived about sixty years after Justin, makes the same public appeal. Revenge was one of the virtues of heathenism; but, he says, we now render to no man evil for evil.

Origen, born at Alexandria in Egypt, in his reply to Celsus, written about A.D. 246, and Lactantius, who was appointed preceptor to the Roman emperor Constantine, were able to make similar appeals: and in confirmation of the justice of such appeals, even the Emperor Julian, after he became an apostate from the faith, in an epistle to Arsacius, an heathen priest (written A.D. 430), held up Christians to the imitation of pagans, on account of the sanctity of their lives, and their love not only to strangers, but to enemies. And as it was at Corinth, Pontus, Galatia, Rome, Carthage, and Alexandria, so now, through the influence of the Bible, adulterers, thieves, drunkards, overcome their bad habits, becoming chaste, honest, sober. Through its influence the headstrong become gentle, the proud humble, the covetous generous, the cruel merciful. Where hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, and envyings prevailed; through the Bible are produced love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance; and that not only in countries before civilized, but in the most barbarous.

"Here, in England, St. Paul's church, in London, was the temple of Diana; St. Peter's church, in Westminster, was the temple of Apollo. The darkness of those times was such, that men slew their own children, and offered them up to

idols." What has produced the great moral change we now see? a change affecting not only England, but all Europe; for when St. Paul set foot at Philippi, all Europe was given to idolatry. How is it that there is not now one heathen temple in it, though Athens alone had hundreds of altars dedicated to idolatry? That change was effected by the Bible. (Jer. xxiii. 29; John xvii. 17.)

Such, also, has been the support it has afforded under the extremity of human sorrow, as to enable men in the very agony of death to pray for their murderers (Acts vii. 60). How many death-beds is it at this moment cheering with hopes of eternal happiness, which could be derived from no other source! (2 Tim. i. 8—10; 1 Cor. xv. 55—59.)

And therefore, if the providence of God is seen in the preservation of the Bible, his grace is seen equally in its effects.

§ iii. *The Agreement of all Parts of the Bible with each other.*

But besides the Preservation and Moral Effects of the Bible, there are other very remarkable circumstances illustrating its divine authority.

We might suppose that the oldest book in the world would tell us many things of which we should otherwise be ignorant; and so the Bible does. We are indebted to the first and second chapters of Genesis for all we know of the creation of the world and of man: we are indebted to the tenth chapter of Genesis for all we know of the origin of nations as they at present exist; and to the eleventh chapter for the reason why, though all are descended from one father and mother, there are so many languages in the world.

But there is a circumstance still more worthy of notice than any yet mentioned with regard to the Bible; and that is, *the agreement of all the parts with each other.*

In this respect there are two circumstances quite peculiar to the Bible, and which make it unlike any other book. The one respects *the writers*; the other, *what they have written.*

1. As to the writers of the Bible.

(1.) The Bible was not written by one person, - but by many, of different stations, abilities, and education.

Moses, who wrote the Pentateuch, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and brought up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Amos was a herdsman, filling one of the lowest stations in society (Amos vii. 14). Matthew was a tax-gatherer; Luke, a physician; Paul, a learned Pharisee; Peter and John, fishermen, "unlearned and ignorant men," i. e. they filled no public station, and had not received a liberal education.

(2.) These persons lived at different periods, and therefore could not have any intercourse with each other.

David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, wrote about 400 years after Moses; Isaiah, about 250 years after David; Matthew, more than 700 years after Isaiah, and 400 years after Malachi, the last of the writers of the Old Testament. Between Moses, who wrote the first, and John, who wrote the last of the sixty-six books which form our present Bible, there is an interval of more than 1500 years.

Now, in such a Book—or rather such a collection of books, such a library—so written, is it not a remarkable fact that there should be an exact agreement in all its parts? In this respect there is no other such book in the world. But this agreement is the more wonderful when we consider,

2. What they have written.

(1.) This agreement is on subjects the *most difficult*.

These writers treat of *the purposes of God*. They unfold to us what is his great design in the government of the world, from the beginning to the end of time. (Gen. iii. 15; 1 John iii. 8; Eph. i. 10.) The first writer, in the Book of Genesis, gives an account of the creation of the world; the last writer, in the Book of the Revelation, gives us a view beyond its close, into an eternal world "where time shall be no longer."

These writers treat of the *nature and end of man*. They lay bare the human heart, so that every one may see reflected his own motives and character. They treat of the nature of true happiness (Eccles. xii. 13; Matt. v. 2, &c. xi. 28).

These subjects; being of infinite importance to all, have engaged the deepest study of the most profound minds: and

their *difficulty* is proved by this fact, that all have differed* about them except the writers of the Bible. Their writings, and theirs only, are as rays of the sun beaming forth from a common centre, to warm and enlighten the world.

(2.) Yet, as further illustrating how wonderful is their agreement, observe the *different forms* in which the writers of the Bible have treated these subjects.

One frames laws, as Moses; another gives an abstract of the history of the Jewish nation, as Joshua; another of a private family, as that of Ruth; another writes Psalms, as David; or Proverbs, as Solomon. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others, give us prophecies; the four Evangelists, a biography; Paul and others, letters.

Between the Old and New Testaments there is a most striking contrast as to the forms of religion inculcated by Moses and by our blessed Lord.

Moses gives a most complicated system of religious worship, abounding in ceremonies, and of so exclusive a character as to be totally unfit to be the religion of mankind (Deut. xvi. 16). The writers of the New Testament have given a system as simple, as that of Moses was complicated; and one of universal application (Mark xvi. 15), enjoining, as of Divine appointment, only two sacraments. How wonderful, that these two systems, at first sight so dissimilar, should be found, on a more careful study, to be in exact agreement; that a work so written should present throughout the same views of the purposes of God, the only views worthy of him which have ever been given; that it should present throughout the same views of the nature of man, different from all others, yet showing that knowledge of his character which is alone found to agree with fact; that it should present the same views of the nature of true happiness, and which are the only views proved by experience to be true; that the religious systems of the Old and New Testament, as unlike as the scaffolding to a building, should yet be found to have the same connection as the scaffolding has to a building!

Whence such agreement in all its parts? Surely, a

* See Mosheim's Eccl. Hist., vol. i., on the absurdities, and opposition to each other, of the Greek and Roman philosophers.

Divine Architect must have superintended such a building! Surely the holy men, who composed the Bible, "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21); "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"* (2 Tim. iii. 16).

The Bible is **THE BOOK OF GOD**, the only, and the perfect, revelation of God's will to man; and **TRUTH, LOVE, HOLINESS, SUPREME REGARD TO GOD'S GLORY**, distinguish it as such. This is the character the writers display; this is the character which it is the great object of their writings to form in all who read them.

§ iv. *The Spirit of the Writers of the Bible.*

I. The Bible is distinguished as the word of God by its perfect regard to **TRUTH**.

(1.) Take a general illustration, which runs through almost the whole book—namely, *the character given of the Jewish people*. What, for instance, does Moses say of them, at the close of his ministry? "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you" (Deut. ix. 24); and again, "For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves," &c. (Ib. xxxi. 29.) And every subsequent writer presents the same view: see Judges ii. 19; 1 Sam. xii. 12; Neh. ix.; Ps. lxxviii.; Isaiah i.

It is not to be supposed that the Jews were so much worse than any other nation. As to their knowledge of Divine truth, the general purity of their worship, and the instances among them of individual piety—as Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Daniel, and others, they were very far superior to every other people. But contrast their history, as given in the Bible, with that of every nation in the world, where is a nation so condemned by its own historians; so fearfully threatened with punishment? (See Levit. xxvi. &c. Jeremiah, and the Prophetic Writings throughout.) And

* Inspiration has been accurately defined to be "such an immediate and complete *discovery* by the Holy Spirit, to the minds of the Sacred Writers, of those things which could not have been otherwise known—and such an effectual *superintendency* as to those matters which they might have been informed of by other means—as entirely preserved them from error in every particular which could in the least affect any of the doctrines or precepts contained in their books"—*Scott's Essays*.

why this difference? Moses and the Prophets wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus were they taught to estimate character justly, as in the light of eternal Truth; and by the same guidance being raised above every prejudice, they were enabled to state the truth faithfully.

(2.) The same uniform regard to truth distinguishes their writings *when called to speak of themselves, or of those whose reputation would reflect credit on themselves.* Thus Moses records, without any palliation,—

The sins of the Hebrew Patriarchs—Abraham (Gen. xx.); Isaac (Gen. xxvi.); Jacob (Gen. xxvii.).

The sins of his grandfather, Levi (Gen. xxxiv. 25; xlix. 5—7).

The sins of his brother, Aaron (Exod. xxxii.); and his two eldest sons. (Levit. x.)

But especially his own sin. From himself we learn that God was once so much displeased as to seek to kill him (Exod. iv. 24). Three times he mentions the sin which excluded him from Canaan (Numb. xx. 1—12; xxvii. 12—14; Deut. xxxii. 51); and his unsuccessful prayer for the reversal of the sentence (Deut. iii. 23, 27).

“While we see other writers,” remarks Lowth, “ambitious of shewing their wit and eloquence, and telling their story in an eloquent, plausible style; a simplicity quite peculiar to itself distinguishes the Bible, forcing on the mind the conviction that these men had no other object than by a naked manifestation of truth to commend themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”

II. The Bible is distinguished as the word of God by the spirit of LOVE which breathes throughout it.

(1.) *The writers display the strongest love to their fellow creatures.* For instance, MOSES, while presenting, as has been already observed, such a picture of the crime and consequent misery of the Jewish people (Deut. xxxii., &c.) as is without a parallel in history, yet manifests such intense love to them as to be constantly interceding in the most earnest manner for them: see Numb. xiv. 11—19. His prayer on one occasion (Exod. xxxii. 32) was, that he might be blotted out of the book of life, rather than they should be destroyed; though that destruction would have been the just punishment of their sins, and would have led to the making of him a great nation, verse 10;

instead of his family descending, as they did, altogether undistinguished.

ST. PAUL, who wrote fourteen of the twenty-one Epistles, displays exactly the same spirit. After having been for twenty-five years most bitterly persecuted by his countrymen, and while they were continuing those persecutions, yet this is the spirit of love in which he writes: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 1, 2). And wherever he went, his conduct testified the sincerity of such declaration. Compare Acts xiii. 46, with xiv. 1, and xvii. 1, &c. 9—11.

Is there not something Divine in this, especially when it is considered what was once the spirit of this man? See Acts ix. 1; xxvi. 11; 1 Tim. i. 13.

(2.) *Consider the view given by them of the love of God.* In what other book can be found such a display of it, as shines forth in the single parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke xv.), or the First Epistle of John?

What a view of the love of God, in the life (altogether without a parallel) of the Lord Jesus Christ—God manifest in the flesh! weeping over apostate Jerusalem (Luke xix. 41), praying for his murderers (Luke xxiii. 34), dying for his enemies (Rom. v. 8.), delighting so to do (Ps. xl. 6, 8; Luke ix. 51; Heb. xii. 2).

(3.) *Love is made by them the sum of man's duty.* See Deut. vi. 5; Matt. xxii. 37—40; Rom. xiii. 10.

To form some idea of the extent to which the love of our fellow-creatures is required, the Bible commands us to overcome evil with good, to bless them that curse us, and to love one another as Christ has loved us. (Matt. v. 44; John xv. 12, "Love one another, as I have loved you," and 1 John iii. 16, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.")

III. HOLINESS distinguishes the Bible as the word of God.

(1.) Whether it be laws, history, narratives of private life, prophecy, proverbs, letters or controversy, we are brought, and in a way in which no other book brings us, as into the

immediate presence of a Being of infinite holiness (Hab. i. 13), before whom the most exalted human characters appear as miserable sinners—Job (xl. 4); Isaiah (vi. 5); Daniel (ix. 4, &c.); Paul (1 Tim. i. 15).

(2.) While presenting to us God as clothed with every attribute that can exalt Him in our conceptions, *the standard of duty they present is nothing short of an imitation of those perfections.* See Lev. xix. 2; Matt. v. 48; 2 Peter i. 4, &c.

(3.) So directly are their writings *in opposition to every evil disposition of the heart*, that they declare that he who hateth his brother is a murderer (1 John iii. 15), that a proud look (Prov. vi. 17), and pride in the heart (xvi. 5), are an abomination to the Lord; that a worldly spirit (Luke xiv. 16, &c.; Rom. viii. 6; 1 John ii. 15) shews a heart to be utterly destitute of love to God; that covetousness is idolatry (Col. iii. 5); and that to be angry without cause, exposes to eternal wrath (Matt. v. 22.)

Has not the holiness of the Bible been the chief cause of its rejection as the word of God, a rejection arising from the effort of men to accommodate their belief to their practice? See 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12, and John vii. 17.

IV. The Bible is distinguished by a SUPREME REGARD TO GOD'S GLORY.

This is a very remarkable feature of the Bible—that, throughout *God alone is exalted.*

(1.) Do the writers speak of any transaction in which they themselves were concerned? there appears the utmost anxiety on their part to lead the reader to reflect on God as the sole Author of all the good done.

Thus Moses (see Deuteronomy throughout) never claims the credit of any of the wonders done by him. God is his great subject.

So Joshua, xxiii. 3; Nehemiah, ii. 12; David, 1 Chron. xix. 11, 14; Peter and John, Acts iii. 12—16; Paul, Acts xxi. 19; 1 Cor. iii. 5, "who then is Paul?" &c.: 2 Cor. iv. 7; iii. 5, "not sufficient to think," &c.

(2.) Do they speak of the operations of nature, it is not by a reference to its laws, but to the great Author of those laws. Thus (Ps. civ. 10, &c.) "He sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills" (see also Ps.

exlvi.); so, with regard to the rain, He restrains (2 Chron. vii. 13), He increases (Jer. v. 24), He prescribes the proportion (Joel ii. 23, 24), appoints the place where it should fall (Ezek. xxxiv. 26; Amos iv. 7, 8): not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him (Matt. x. 29).

(3.) Do they speak of the revolutions of empires? God alone is exalted.

As clay in the hand of the potter, so are all the kingdoms of the earth in God's hand. At what instant he shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and pull down and destroy it, or to build and plant it; so is it according to his will (Jer. xviii. 7; Dan. iv. 35). *Nebuchadnezzar* (Jeremiah xxv. 9) and *Cyrus* (Isaiah xlv. 28; xlv. 5), the one in destroying, the other in restoring Jerusalem and her temple, are but performing God's pleasure.

(4.) The great historical subject of the Old Testament is the Jewish people; and in their history how remarkably is God alone exalted!

The instruments used for their deliverance from Egypt and possession of Canaan seem purposely selected with this object. Moses's rod bringing the plagues, dividing the Red Sea; Moses's arm uplifted in prayer, defeating the Amalekites; the ark borne of the priests dividing the waters of Jordan (Joshua iv.); the blowing of rams' horns causing the walls of Jericho to fall down (Joshua vi.); the various deliverances by the Judges; Shamgar's ox-goad (Judges iii.); Gideon's empty pitchers (Judges vii.); Samson's hair the seat of his power (Judges xvi. 17—20); and, again, David's sling and stone destroying Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 45). Throughout it is made to appear that the prosperity of the Jews depended, not on their forming a military spirit (they were forbidden the use of cavalry, Deut. xvii. 16,) or acquiring commercial wealth, (Levit. xxv.) or strengthening themselves by powerful alliances (these were forbidden them, Isa. xxx. 2, 3; Hosea xiv. 3), but simply on their trust in God.

(5.) Throughout the Bible, faith is the great principle that accomplishes every thing. (Heb. xi.) And why? That all boasting may be excluded (Rom. iii. 27; Eph. ii. 8): that he that glorieth should glory in the Lord (1 Cor. i. 29, 31).

(6.) If the writers of the Bible speak of sin, they represent the great evil of it to be, that it dishonours God.

This brought upon the Amalekites (Exod. xvii. 16), upon Sennacherib (2 Kings xix. 22), and Belshazzar, their destruction; "the God in whose hand their breath was, and whose were all their ways, *had they not glorified*" (Dan. v. 23). Hence was the Gentile world given over to a reprobate mind, because, when they knew God, *they glorified him not as God* (Rom. i. 21). Hence God's controversy with the Jews (Heb. iii. 19); and even Moses, the most eminent of prophets (Deut. xxxiv. 10), neglecting in one instance to *sanctify* God in the eyes of the children of Israel (Numb. xx. 12), was denied his fondest earthly desire (Deut. iii. 23, 27).

Eli's punishment, for neglecting to restrain his sons (1 Sam. ii. 29, 30); Hezekiah's, for displaying his treasures (2 Chron. xxxii. 25—31), and particularly David's punishment for his sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. xii. 9. with Ps. li. 4), illustrate the same great truth, that the evil of sin is, that it dishonours God. Hence the death of Uzzah (2 Sam. vi.), and of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v.), and of Herod (Acts xii. 23), and the solemn sanction of the Third Commandment.

The same principle of disregard to God's honour is represented by the writers of the Bible as having raised up adversaries against Solomon (1 Kings xi. 14), and leading to the division of Israel and Judah. To this cause is attributed the captivity of the Ten Tribes, and afterwards of Judah (2 Kings xvii. 14), and their last terrible destruction by the Romans (Luke xix. 42—44). "Therefore God hid his face from them, because they were children in whom was no faith" (Deut. xxxii. 20; Acts iii. 23). "Because of unbelief, they were broken off" (Rom. xi. 20).

(7.) It is declared that the glory of God ought to be the great motive and end of all human action (1 Cor. x. 31); "whether, therefore, ye eat or drink," &c. (1 Pet. iv. 11.) Our Lord prays (John xii. 28), "Father, glorify thy Name." In the prayer he has taught us this is its chief subject; it begins and ends with it. In fact, the great end of the incarnation of Christ, (John xvii.) and of the creation of all things, is declared to be the glory of God, the display of the Divine perfections (Rev. iv. 11).

Does not such a book, which breathes throughout such a spirit of truth, love, holiness, supreme regard to God's glory; which makes us feel *as no other book does*, that "of God, and through God, and to God, are all things" (Rom. xi. 36)—does not such a book contain within itself the proof that it is the word of God?

But, that we may be led the more to admire the condescension of God in the abundant evidence he has given us that the Bible is his word, some notice must be taken of

§ v. *Miracles and Prophecy.*

There are two things especially which man, with the ordinary powers which God has given him, cannot do :

1. He cannot alter the established course of nature.
2. He cannot certainly know things to come.

Miracles.

- I. He cannot alter the established course of nature.

By the course of nature, is meant that course according to which it is observed from experience God usually acts ; and which, from its regularity, is called the laws, or *established* course, of nature. This course, so established, man of himself cannot alter.

For instance: he cannot feed two millions of people in a wilderness, and that for forty years, by ordering the clouds to drop down a substance which shall be a substitute for bread ; and so ordering it, that on a particular day in the week, if they gathered a double quantity, it would not corrupt, whereas on every other day it would. Again ; no man, with the ordinary powers which God has given him, can raise the dead ; still less can he raise himself from the dead. When individuals can thus act (and when they do, we call it a miracle), we know that they are endowed with more than human power. The proof of that power being immediately from God is complete, when the miracle is expressly wrought to promote truth, love, holiness, and a supreme regard to God's glory.

But Moses and our blessed Lord wrought such miracles. Moses (who, as the writer of the Pentateuch, laid the foundation-stone of the Old Testament, and who claimed to be the servant of God) fed such a multitude in such a manner; and our blessed Lord (who claimed to be the Son of God, John v. 23, and on whose resurrection the writers of the New Testament laid the chief claim to his being considered so, Rom. i. 4, and therefore to their inspiration, as acting by his authority) raised himself from the dead. Both Moses, as the servant, and our Lord, as the Son of God (Heb. iii, 5, 6), performed many miracles, all expressive of and calculated to promote truth, love, and holiness, forming parts of a plan which was to display in brightest colours the glory of God. (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

Leslie, in his excellent work entitled "Short Method with the Deists," has given the four following infallible marks of the reality of a miracle—

First, Were the facts open to men's senses?—*i. e.* were they of such a nature as that men's senses can clearly judge of them?

Secondly, Were they public?

Thirdly, Were public monuments kept up, and some outward actions constantly performed, in memory of the fact thus publicly wrought?

Fourthly, Were such monuments set up, and such actions and observances instituted, at the very time when those events took place; and afterwards continued without interruption?

The first two render it impossible for men at the time to be deceived; the last two, for deception to be practised in after-ages.

Let the reader apply these to the miracles of Moses and our Lord; particularly bearing in mind the Passover and the Lord's Supper, both commemorated to this day.

The Miracles of Moses.

There are two considerations connected with the miracles of Moses well worthy of attention.

1. *That he could not have any worldly motive for deceiving either himself or others with respect to them.*

The attachment of Moses to the people of Israel, on whose behalf he wrought his miracles, had cost him the loss of every thing dear to worldly ambition. In refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, (choosing rather to suffer affliction with them,) he had renounced honour, wealth, pleasure: and such was his anxiety and danger, as leader of the Israelites, that nothing short of the fullest conviction of his acting by a Divine authority could have led him to bear the weight of such a charge. Even under the influence of this solemn obligation, there were times when, in the bitterness of his soul, he entreated to be released from his painful pre-eminence. (Numb. xi. 15.)

2. *Again; as Moses had no motive for deception, so was it impossible that those among whom he wrought his miracles could be deceived by them.*

Nothing short of the fullest conviction that his miracles were wrought by God, could have induced the Jews to obey Moses. The laws he imposed were very burthensome; purposely opposed to the dictates of their corrupt nature, and the idolatrous habits they had contracted in Egypt: and (as we might have supposed under the circumstances) they were constantly rebelling against him, shewing a disposition to return to Egypt whenever disasters overtook them (Exod. xiv. 11; Numb. xi. 5. xiv. 3. xx. 5). The most formidable conspiracies were raised against him (Numb. xvi.); nor had he any human means, any standing army, any large party on his side, to enforce obedience. (See, Numb. xii. 2, an instance of the sedition of his own brother and sister.) He sometimes stood alone. A most striking instance of this is seen in the circumstance of his denouncing punishment on the whole nation for murmuring at the report of the spies*. On the very borders of the promised land, and when in a state of rebellion against him, Moses commands them never to attempt to enter Canaan. He declares he will march and counter-march them for forty years in the Wilderness (that waste howling wilderness! see Deut. viii. 15); and that all those then in arms should perish. For forty years he does thus march and counter-march them. Two-and-forty of

* See Graves on the Pentateuch.

such journeyings are mentioned in Numb. xxxiii. And they submit (Numb. xiii. xiv.). They never cast him off, but held him in the highest reverence (see Deut. xxxiv. 8). How could this be, if his power had not been more than human, and therefore miraculous? if it had not been, as he declared it to be, Divine?

The testimony of millions of eye-witnesses to such a series of miracles; miracles inseparable from the history; miracles which were often judgments on themselves (Ps. cvii.); wrought during a period of forty years; a testimony opposed to their inclinations, wrung from their convictions; a testimony from which they have never deviated, and confirmed to us by institutions at this moment existing among them, and which have been observed from that day to this; miracles thus attested must be believed, if we would believe any thing.

The Resurrection of our Lord.

In contemplating the fact of our blessed Lord's resurrection, the same striking illustration of the goodness of God appears in the abundant evidence attending it; since he graciously gave to those who witnessed it, and indeed to those who did not, every possible motive and opportunity for investigating its truth. On such a subject, little more can here be done than to recommend the works of some of those who have written professedly on it.

1. West has entered fully into the question; admirably harmonizing the different accounts of the four Evangelists.

2. Bishop Sherlock has thrown the evidence for the resurrection of our Lord into the very interesting form of a supposed trial in a court of justice. Witnesses are examined, counsel heard, the judge sums up, the jury give their verdict.

3. Others have dwelt on the immediate results of the Apostles' preaching this fact of the resurrection of our Lord on the very spot where, and immediately after, it happened; before the very men who had procured his crucifixion, to whom his body was committed, and who were aware that he said he should rise again. On the first appeal of the Apostles, three thousand of the murderers of our Lord became his disciples—consequently, witnesses to his resurrection.—

PROPHETCY.

and in a few years many thousands more (Acts xxi. 20.), in defiance of the severest persecution.

4. Lord Lyttelton has shewn that the conversion of St. Paul is in itself an unanswerable proof of our Lord's resurrection.

5. But, out of the many proofs of which the subject admits, and which have been often urged, take another—the altered state of the Apostles' minds; which can be accounted for in no other way. Even before his crucifixion they all forsook their Lord, and fled; and so abandoned were they almost to despair; so hardened were their hearts by unbelief, both of their own prophets, and the frequent assertions of our Lord himself that he should rise, that they would not believe the most unexceptionable testimony of the women of their own company; who came, saying, they had seen a vision of angels which declared that he was alive. (Luke xxiv. 11.)

With this state of mind contrast their conduct as recorded in the Acts (ch. iv. ver. 13, &c.): the undeviating testimony of their after-life; the glow of holy joy which, in the midst of their bitterest sufferings, brought on them entirely by their declaration of this fact of the resurrection of our Lord, yet shewed them to be more than conquerors (Acts v. 41). Read the Epistles of St. Peter, who had denied his Master with oaths and cursing, who knew that if Christianity was true he should die by crucifixion (John xxi. 18, 19); and ask yourself, whence could he have attained such ability, such feelings, such hopes, but as he had been begotten again to them by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Pet. i. 3.)

Prophecy.

II. As no man can do such miracles except God were with him, so no man CAN SHEW THINGS WHICH SHALL BE **HEREAFTER** (Rev. iv. 1) or prophecy, except as directed by God.

"The evidence of prophecy," Bishop Horsley remarks, "lies in these two particulars; that events have been predicted which are not within human foresight; and the accomplishment of predictions has been brought about which must surpass human power and contrivance: the prediction, therefore, was not from man's sagacity, nor the event from

man's will and design. And then, the goodness of the design, and the intricacy of the contrivance, complete the proof that the whole is of God."

It is easy to illustrate this by an example.

Prophecies respecting Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt.

Suppose, for instance, any one should now declare of some well-known city—say, London—that it should be taken by a foreign invader. If this came to pass, what would be the impression on the minds of those who saw the event, and compared it with the account?

It might be objected that this does not necessarily imply more than human foresight. Perhaps some signs of its approaching captivity might be discerned in the distant horizon; a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, yet sufficiently indicating as probable the coming storm.

Perhaps it was only a bold assertion accidentally fulfilled; made and fulfilled, because founded on general experience. Sooner or later, we know it to be, according to general experience, that cities and nations should rise and fall, flourish and decay; and why not this city, as well as any other in the world?

But suppose this account had descended to particulars, stating how this city was to be delivered up: 1. That an *overrunning flood* would be the means of its captivity. 2. That at the time *its inhabitants would be in a state of drunkenness*. 3. That its palace (which it is ever the great object of the conqueror to spare) should be not only taken, but dissolved or molten. 4. And that not merely captivity, but *desolation*, should be its portion for ever. Such particulars, recorded hundreds of years before they happened, must evidently be beyond human foresight.

But, besides this, suppose the book which contained this prediction had also declared the fate of another neighbouring city; descending also to particulars, stating,

1. *The particular nations* (nations at the time scarcely in existence) which should take this city.

2. *The name* (one hundred years before he was born) of the person who was to head the enemies' armies.

3. *The very time* when it should be taken.

4. *The manner*, taken by surprise, during a time of

feasting; but not like the former city, by an overrunning flood, but by the *drying up* of the river.

5. That it should be *utterly destroyed*.

6. Suppose these predictions should be uttered at a time when this city was mistress of the world, and in the height of her glory; and the predictions respecting both cities came to pass accordingly.

Is not such a combination of circumstances beyond human foresight?

But, again, suppose this same book declared, of some other mighty city, that it should fall from its greatness; but, unlike either of the first two cities, it should not be doomed to utter destruction, but *merely sink into insignificance*; so that, while its place might be easily pointed out, it yet should be inhabited by only a few fishermen.

If, again, the same books, speaking of some mighty empire, foretold, that not destruction, but from age to age *perpetual degradation* should await it; so that it should be looked upon as the basest of the kingdoms, neither exalt itself any more, nor even have a prince of its own to govern it; and it came to pass accordingly; could we doubt from whom alone such precise and wonderful foreknowledge must proceed? Should we not at once be convinced that the book containing these predictions, and appealing to historical facts quite independent of itself for their fulfilment, was indeed the *Book of God*?

Such is the Bible; such the nature of the prophecies by which it proves its claim to be the word of God.

When NINEVEH, ancient as Ashur the son of Shem (Gen. x. 11), was an exceeding great city (Jonah iii. 3), declared by Diodorus Siculus, a heathen historian, to be sixty miles round; encompassed with walls one hundred feet high, and so broad that three chariots might drive abreast on them; having 1500 towers of 200 feet in height placed at intervals on these walls; thinking within herself, "I am, and there is none beside me" (Zeph. ii. 15); then Nahum, and, one hundred years after him, Zephaniah, foretold that of which Diodorus Siculus, utterly ignorant of the prediction, gives us the historical account, confirming all that they had said. (See Nahum i. 8, 10; and Zeph. ii. 13, 15.)

Of BABYLON, older perhaps than Nineveh (Gen. x. 10); the glory of kingdoms (Isa. xiii. 19); the golden city (Isa.

xiv. 4); abundant in treasure; the praise of the whole earth (Jer. li. 13, 41); the great metropolis of the world, after the destruction of Nineveh; of Babylon, which according to Herodotus, had one hundred gates of solid brass, and walls thirty-five feet high, and so thick that six chariots could go abreast on the top of them; the Bible foretold the destruction, specifying the various particulars already referred to; namely:

1. As to the particular *nations* which should take it. (Isa. xxi. 2; Jer. li. 11.)

2. The *commander's name*. (Isaiah xlv. 28—xlv. 1.)

3. The *time*. (Jer. xxv. 11, 12.)

4. The *manner*; by surprise. (Jer. l. 24; li. 39.) The drying up of the river. (Isa. xlv. 27; Jer. l. 38; li. 36.)

5. Its *utter destruction*. (Isa. xiii. 19; xiv. 22; Jer. l. 13, 23, 39, 40.)

6. Consider the *improbability* of the fulfilment of these prophecies at the time they were delivered. Isaiah prophesied one hundred years before Jeremiah, and when the Persians were scarcely known as a nation: Jeremiah prophesied not sixty years before it was taken, and at the time when Nebuchadnezzar, its king, had very greatly enlarged it (Dan. iv. 30); and he, moreover, the great conqueror of the age. The historical account confirming these predictions is from the heathen historians Herodotus and Xenophon; the one living about 250 years, the other about 350 years after Isaiah.

7. The complete fulfilment of these prophecies was gradually accomplished through a period of several hundred years. After Babylon's first humiliation by the destruction of her idol temple, and her capture by Cyrus, efforts were made from time to time to restore her to her former grandeur. Alexander, "the most powerful prince that ever reigned; the most obstinate with regard to carrying on his projects; a prince, none of whose enterprises had ever miscarried, attempted it, but he failed; failed in this only, though it did not seem so difficult as the rest." But as Rollin further remarks, heaven and earth would sooner have passed away than Alexander's design have been executed. Prophecy had declared otherwise; "I will sweep it with the besom of destruction." We are witnesses to the truth of these prophecies. Such is the

present state of both Nineveh and Babylon, that their exact situation cannot be ascertained. "Their very ruins have been ruined." And we know that for the last 1600 years they have lain in this state, from the testimony of Lucian, a heathen, who was born near the spot in the second century.

TYRE is now as it is described in Ezekiel xxvi. 4, 5; though, at the time he wrote, in the *greatest commercial grandeur*. See chap. xxvii. and Isaiah xxiii. 3, 8. Tyre is now a hovel for fishermen. Her pride sealed her doom, and called forth the voice of prophecy to proclaim it. (Isa. xxiii. 9; Ezek. xxvii. 32. xxviii. 5.)

EGYPT, once the greatest and the most fertile, is now the basest of kingdoms; according to Ezekiel's prophecy (chap. xxix. 14, 15), not having had, for the last 2000 years, a prince of her own to govern it. It was conquered by the Babylonians, afterwards by the Persians, then by the Macedonians, then by the Romans. After its capture by the Romans it became subject to the Saracens, then to the Mamelukes, and is now a province of the Turkish empire, which is the most degraded of all the kingdoms of Europe.

The Preservation of the Jews as a separate people.

"But there is a still more wonderful prophecy fulfilling; that is, the prophecy of Moses, and others of the sacred writers, respecting the present state of the Jews. Not to mention the various details of their history, which prophecy had distinctly marked, as to the manner in which that state should be brought about, their preservation is altogether opposed to general experience. That a nation should exist, as the Jews have done, for 3300 years; able to trace their origin from one individual, and without mingling with any other nation, is altogether opposed to experience. The Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Greeks, the Romans, though once claiming universal empire, have not a single representative upon earth. Our own nation is made up of Britons, Romans, Saxons, Normans, &c.; but, though not one thousand years have passed away, yet are we so blended into one people, that these several parts can no longer be distinguished; and the remark applies generally. We find the exception, the only exception, where we should have least expected it. For consider,

1. *The ancestor of the Jews.* Abraham was not a law-

giver, a philosopher, a conqueror. He built no city. (Heb. xi. 9.) He left but one son, from whom this people descended. When he died, he had not a foot of land but the cave in which to bury him. (Acts vii.)

2. *The state of the Jews at the time the prophecies respecting their being preserved a separate people were delivered.* Moses's remarkable prophecy (Deut. xxviii. ; Levit. xxvi. 44.) was written when they were wanderers in the Wilderness, which had been the premature grave of all the men among them who entered it. They were surrounded with nations greater and mightier than they, and who combined to attempt their destruction, but whom they were commanded to extirpate. Jeremiah's prophecy (chap. xli. 28) was when their utter destruction was threatened by their captivity in Babylon, and ten of their twelve tribes already had disappeared.

3. *Their peculiar afflictions as a nation.* "Wars, battles, sieges, fires, famines, pestilences, rebellions, massacres, persecutions, captivity, slavery, misery, mark their whole history." Bishop Newton. (Luke xix. 41, &c.) At the last destruction of their city by Titus, 1,100,000 perished, 97,000 were taken prisoners. In the rebellion that followed, 580,000 were destroyed in public combat, besides an innumerable company that, in other places, killed themselves, or perished through famine, banishment, or other miseries. Fifty fortified castles were plundered and burnt, and 985 towns flourishing and populous; and so general was the massacre of the inhabitants, that all Judea was in some measure left desolate, and converted into a desert.

4. *Their present state of suffering and dispersion.* Ever since that event, *i. e.* for more than 1700 years, their land trodden under foot of the Gentiles; they driven from their country; scattered over the face of the whole earth; all distinction of tribe confounded; without even the form of a civil government; their temple and priesthood destroyed: and without the means, therefore, of uniting in one act of public worship; for who shall offer their sacrifice? yet they exist; unbelievers in Christianity, and yet the guardians of those very prophecies which prove the unreasonableness of their unbelief; mingled among, but distinct from, those around them; the wonder and scorn of the world; "as a bush on fire and not consumed."

And 2000, 3000 years ago, was this pointed out by different writers of the Bible, each confirming or throwing some additional light on what the other had declared. See Isaiah x. 21 ; Ezek. vi. 8 ; Luke xxi. 22, 24 ; Rom. xi. 25. Can we then doubt that such writers spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost?

The Extent of Prophecy.

But the prophecies respecting Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, and the preservation of the Jews as a separate people, form but a very small part of the prophecies contained in this wonderful book. "In the heart of the captivity, in the abyss of the Babylonian bondage, Daniel weighed and numbered the kingdoms of the earth." (See Davison on Prophecy.)

The prophecies of the Bible form a sketch, by anticipation, of the history of the world ; not of its politics, as such ; but of its history as connected with the progress of religion. (See Butler's Analogy, Part ii. chap. vii. p. 360.)

Prophecy foretold the overthrow of the Persian empire by Alexander (Dan. xi. 2, 4), and at the moment it was rising into fame ; particularly noticing the rapidity of his conquests, comparing him to the panther, or leopard, which is remarkable for the impetuosity with which it seizes its prey (Dan. vii. 6) ; and we know, that in the short space of 12 years, Alexander extended his conquests to the very banks of the Ganges. Prophecy foretold the fourfold division of his empire, and particularly the wars and internal commotions of Egypt and Syria, from his death to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Prophecy foretold by Moses the rise of the Roman empire, 800 years before its existence. (See Deut. xxviii. 49, 50.)

Prophecy foretold not only the propagation of Christianity, but of its corruptions ; particularly one form of Antichrist, emphatically the man of sin ; distinguished by its spirit of persecution, its pretence to the power of working miracles, its worship of the dead, its abstinence from meats, its forbidding to marry, and blasphemous assumption of Divine honours. Compare Dan. vii. 25, with 2 Thess. ii. 9 ; 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2 ; Rev. xiii. 11, 18. To which, of all the corruptions of religion, that of the Roman Catholics bears the nearest resemblance. (See Bishops Hurd and Newton

on the Prophecies, and Bishop Jewell's Apology, and his exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians.)

Prophecy foretold the ravages of the Saracens coming from the south, and of the Turks from the north (Dan. xi. 40, 41); entering into the most remarkable details respecting the nature and extent of their conquests; specifying what countries should escape, and what fall under their power. (See Newton on the Prophecies.)

Prophecies, uttered between two and three thousand years ago, describe the *present state*, not only, as we have seen, of the Jews, Egyptians, &c., but of the Africans, Arabians, of Europe, Asia, and we may say of America also.

The Prophecy of Noah.

When the earth was re-peopled by the descendants of the three sons of Noah, Asia was principally peopled by the descendants of Shem; Africa, by those of Ham; Europe and the northern part of Asia, by those of Japheth. We see now, as foretold more than 3000 years ago by Noah, Japheth enlarged, dwelling also in the tents of Shem (Gen. ix. 27). At this moment not a single spot in Europe or America is the colony or property of any of the nations whom the Scriptures represent as the descendants of Shem; while the extent of the British dominions alone, over parts of Asia, includes nearly one hundred millions of people. We now see slavery yet lingering over the descendants of Ham: in North and South America, and the foreign West India Islands, they are still the servants of servants (Gen. ix. 25—27). While, in striking contrast to the descendants of Ham, (showing the discrimination of prophecy,) appears the posterity of Ishmael. (See Keith on the Prophecies.)

Ishmael, and his descendants the Arabians.

The Arabians, alone unconquered of all the nations of the earth, though Sesostris, Cyrus, Pompey, Trajan, and the Turks in the height of their power, attempted it, once exercising for 300 years a dominion over the most civilized and fertile portions of the earth, yet a striking contrast to what usually follows, (as for instance, with the conquerors of Rome,) their own habits unaffected, uncivilized in the midst

of the civilized world; they dwell, as Prophecy foretold three thousand years ago, wild and free, in the presence of their enemies; their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them (Gen. xvi. 10—12; xvii. 20).

The children of the bondwoman free; the children of promise, descendants of a common ancestor, conquered and out-cast. How opposed to what the Prophets themselves must have thought probable at the time they wrote these predictions! Whence such knowledge of the future but from God? what the book that contains them, but the Book of God?

The present state not only of Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt, but of Judea (its present desolation contrasted with its former fertility, Lev. xxvi.; Jer. iv.): and so of Ammon (Ezek. xxv. 2. 5. 7. 10; xxi. 32; Jer. xlix. 2; Zeph. ii. 9); Moab (Jer. xlviii.); Idumea (Jer. xlix. 7; Isa. xxxiv.; Ezek. xxxv.; Obad.); Philistia (Ezek. xxv.; Jer. xlvii. 5; Amos i.; Zeph. ii.; Zech. ix.); Lebanon (Isa. x. 19; xxxiii. 9, &c.); has been described by prophecy.

From the beginning of the world, prophecy, as it is found in the Bible, has been in a continued course of fulfilment; accumulating its evidence as time advances; affording to those who (as we) have not seen the miracles of Moses, Elijah, Elisha, of our blessed Lord or of his Apostles, a standing miracle, a light like the sun, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

The peculiar value of Prophecy, as an evidence that the Bible is the Word of God.

But, strong as is the evidence arising from a consideration of the prophecies of the Bible considered *separately* (as shewing a foreknowledge which could come only from God), their great value is in this, that all these wonderful prophecies are parts of one system of prophecy; unfolding to us prophecy as a part of a great scheme of Infinite Love. "*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*" (Rev. xix. 10; 2 Pet. i. 20). Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Jews, &c., became the subjects of prophecy, because, and only so far as, their history touched upon the subject of His kingdom. In the history of His kingdom on earth, the Bible presents two

great epochs,—the first and the second coming of Christ; and under these two great epochs all prophecy may be arranged.

1. The *first epoch*, including the view which prophecy gave, before his coming, of the person and office of our Blessed Lord, presents such an outline of him as embraces all the chief points of his history as recorded in the Gospels. His Divine and human nature (Isa. ix. 6). His descent; from the first woman (Gen. iii. 15); from Abraham (Gen. xii. 3); Isaac, not Ishmael; Jacob, not Esau; Judah, the fourth in descent, not Reuben, the first-born (Gen. xlix. 10); Jesse (Isa. xi.); David, the youngest of eight (Jer. xxiii. 5). The time of his coming (Gen. xlix. 10; Dan. ix. 24; Haggai ii. 6—9); the place of his birth (Micah v. 2); circumstances attending it (Isa. vii. of a virgin: Mal. iii. 1, his forerunner). His offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King (Psal. cx.; Zech. vi. 13; Isa. lxi. 1). His ministry, where it should begin (Isa. ix. 1, with Matt. iv. 14); that it should be confirmed by miracles (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6). His sufferings and death (Psal. xxii. 16; Zech. xiii. 7; Isa. liii.). His resurrection (Psal. xvi.); ascension (Psal. lxviii. 18). His sending the Holy Spirit (Joel ii. 28).

2. The *second epoch*, including the various fortunes of His church after his ascension till his second coming, embracing many prophecies yet to be fulfilled, but the general bearing of which is to encourage the most exalted hopes as to the glory awaiting that church; the conversion of the Jews (Rom. xi.), and all the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. (Rev. xi. 15.) See also chaps. xxi. xxii., a most magnificent description of the heavenly state, with which this wonderful book closes.

If, then, we consider (as Bishop Hurd suggests) these three things in relation to the prophecies of the Bible,—1st, The prodigious *extent of prophecy*, from the Fall of man to the consummation of all things; 2dly, The *dignity of the Person* who is the chief subject of prophecy—the Seed of the woman, and the Son of man, yet above all principality and power as the Word and Wisdom of God, the Eternal Son of his Father, the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person; 3dly, The declared *purpose of prophecy*, to deliver a world from ruin, to abolish

sin and death, to purify and immortalize human nature ;— we may well say, “ Tell ye, Bring them near,” that with such evidence can hesitate to receive the Bible as the word of God ; “ yea, let them take counsel together : Who hath declared this from ancient time ? who hath told it from that time ? Have not I the Lord ? ” (Isa. xlv. 21.)

Yet, had there been no prophecies in the Bible, would it not have been proved to be the word of God by the miracles wrought to prove it ? Had it contained neither prophecies nor miracles, would not its wonderful preservation ; its moral influence in the world ; the exact agreement of all its parts with each other ; the spirit of the writers ; their regard to truth, love, holiness, and the glory of God—would not these have established the same truth ? What then must be their *united* force ? And this, and more than this, we actually possess. But this great subject is thus glanced at, rather to awaken than set at rest inquiry, which, the more it is pursued in a right spirit, will the more deeply convince us, that, in receiving the Bible as the word of God, we have not followed cunningly devised fables ; that we may, as it graciously bids us do, build on it our hopes for eternity (John vi. 68).

And is the Bible the word of God ? and can we think for a moment who God is, and our relation to him as his creatures (Acts xvii. 28 ; Rom. xiv. 12), and not feel that we should listen with deepest attention, and entire submission of our understanding and heart, to what it teaches ? Let us take warning from St. Paul's admonition to the *Hebrews* (xii. 25) not to turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven. Let us imitate the example of the *Thessalonians*, and receive the Bible, not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God (1 Thess. ii. 13). Like *David*, let us resolve, “ I will hear what God the Lord will speak ” (Ps. lxxxv. 8). Like *Mary*, let us ponder these things in our heart (Luke ii. 19, 51) ; and in a spirit of obedience, with *Samuel*, say, “ Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth ” (1 Sam. iii. 10). And, especially, as the Bible is dictated by the Holy Spirit, let it be read with *constant prayer* for the teaching of that Spirit. This direction unattended to, renders every other, to all practical purposes, useless—this direction patiently followed, will open the mind to all saving truths (Luke xi. 9. 13 ; Psalm cxliii. 10). Nor let the

reader ever forget that that evidence for the divine authority of the Scriptures, which it is most important he should possess, is the experience of its holy influence on his own heart and life.—“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.” (John vii. 17.)

QUESTIONS ON CHAP. I.

On what does a right use and even an understanding of the Bible depend? [p. 3.]

What makes the preservation of the Bible so remarkable? [p. 4.]

How do we know the Bible has been preserved unaltered? [p. 5.]

Give some instances of the effects of the Bible. [p. 6, &c.]

What makes the agreement of all the parts of the Bible with each other so remarkable? [p. 8, &c.]

Truth, love, holiness, a supreme regard to God's glory, distinguish the writers of the Bible—give an illustration of each of these qualities in them. [p. 11, &c.]

What is a miracle? and what are Leslie's marks of a real miracle? [p. 17, &c.]

Illustrate how God graciously so appointed it that it should appear evident that Moses acted by His authority. [p. 19.]

Mention the names of some of those who have written on the Resurrection of our Lord, and the views they have taken of it. [p. 20.]

Give some illustration that the prophecies of the Old Testament are above human conjecture or sagacity. [p. 21, &c.]

Give some account of the prophecies respecting Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, the preservation of the Jews as a separate people, Noah's prophecy, and that concerning Ishmael, and those concerning our blessed Lord. [p. 22, &c.]

By what three considerations does Bishop Hurd shew that the prophecies of the Bible prove it to be the word of God? [p. 30.]

In what spirit should we read the Bible? [p. 31.]

Which direction for the profitable reading of the Bible is of all others most important? [p. 31, &c.]

What is that evidence for the divine authority of the Bible which it is most important we should possess? [p. 32.]

N.B. This list of questions may be much enlarged; and both the framing of such questions on each section, and giving written answers to them, would afford a profitable exercise to the young.—Thus, § 1. How much older is the first part of the Bible than any other history which we have? Who are the oldest profane historians whose writings we have? With what writer of the Old Testament were they contemporary? &c. &c.

CHAP. II.

FOR WHAT PURPOSE WAS THE BIBLE GIVEN?

CONTENTS.—§ i. *Ignorance of mankind without the Bible.* § ii. *God's great design in the gift of the Bible.*

The inquiry proposed in this chapter is most important. The Bible being the word of God, for what purpose was it given?

§ i. *Ignorance of mankind without the Bible.*

Consider what, as to religious truth, is, and ever has been, the state of mankind without the Bible.

“When Adam died, Methuselah was about 200 years old; when Methuselah died, Shem was near 100; when Shem died, Abraham was about 150: so that a tradition need pass only through two hands from Adam to Abraham: and yet, within this period, the tradition of the one true God was in a manner extinguished, and the world was generally lapsed into polytheism and idolatry.” (Bishop Newton, on the Expediency of writing the Scriptures.)

The first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans very accurately describes what are men's views of the character of God, what is their own character, wherever the Bible is not (See particularly verse 23, 29—32). That chapter was written nearly 2000 years ago; yet so much is human nature the same in every age, that it presents to us a faithful picture of the present state of mankind—the natural fruits of the human heart (See Magee on the Atonement, vol. i. p. 15).

Where the Bible is not, mankind are ignorant on these two points: they are *ignorant of God*; and they are *ignorant of themselves*.

1. They have no just views of the character of God; His nature and attributes.

It has been truly said, "No instance can be mentioned of any nation emerging from Atheism, or Idolatry, to the knowledge and adoration of the One true God, without the assistance of Revelation. The Africans, the Tartars, and the ingenious Chinese, have had time enough, one would think, to find out the true and right idea of God; and yet, after 4000 years' improvements, and the full exercise of reason, they have at this day got no further in their progress towards true religion than to worship stocks, stones, and devils" (1 Cor. x. 20; see also Bishop Heber's Journal, vol. iii. p. 354, where a most affecting account is given of the present state of the religion of the Hindoos as the great stimulant to crime).

"All nations that have not been, directly or indirectly, taught by the Bible, are Idolators;" and in proportion as its circulation has been checked, men have shewn a tendency to return to idolatry, as abundantly appears from the history of the Christian Church during the ninth and two following centuries, and the state of those churches at this moment where the circulation of the Scriptures is checked.

2. As necessarily following from their ignorance of God, mankind, where the Bible is not, are grossly ignorant of themselves; they have no just views of their own character and condition.

Facts every where illustrate, that, in proportion to men's ignorance of the Bible, they become "vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts are darkened." Yet, so far from being aware of their folly, they profess themselves wise; are proud, and boasters, while without understanding; glorying in their shame (Rom. i. 22; Isa. xlv. 9—20; Jeremiah viii. 9; Psalm lxxiv. 20).

Such being, and ever having been, the state of mankind wherever the Bible is not, we may remark, God gave us the Bible to teach us both the knowledge of His character and of our own character and condition; to shew us what He is, and what we are.

§ ii. *God's great design in the gift of the Bible.*

But we must go a step further, and ask, What is the amount of this knowledge of God and of ourselves which we derive from the Holy Scriptures? This is what we

learn when taught just views of God and ourselves,—that God is infinitely holy; man a fallen being, under Divine condemnation, dead in trespasses and sins (Gen. iii.; Rom. v. 12, 18; Eph. ii. 1).

This, then, is the reason above all others for which God gave us the Bible. We are transgressors of his holy law, miserable sinners, children of wrath: it would have been impossible to know, unless God had told us, how we may be reconciled to him and be made holy. The Bible unfolds to us the remedy, which, in infinite love, God has provided for the misery of man. The views God gives of his own character, and our character and condition, are given with reference to this.

Bishop Butler has well expressed what is here meant: "The world being in a state of apostasy and wickedness, and consequently of ruin, this gave occasion for the mediation of a Divine Person, the Messiah, in order to the recovery of the world" (Analogy, Part i. p. 14.)

Or, as he speaks of it more fully (Part ii. chap. i. p. 210), as "a dispensation, carrying on by the Son and Holy Spirit, for the recovery and salvation of mankind, who are represented in Scripture as in a state of ruin." And again (p. 212); "The Son and Spirit have each his proper office in that great dispensation of Providence, the redemption of the world: the one, our Mediator; the other, our Sanctifier." (1 John iv. 13, 14.)

In one word, then, the purpose for which God gave us the Bible was to *make us wise unto salvation* (2 Tim. iii. 15). (1) It shews the necessity for salvation; (2) it explains the nature of that salvation; and, (3) becomes, as the instrument of the Spirit, the power of God to salvation to every one that believes (John xvii. 17; Eph. vi. 17; 1 Peter i. 23).

That this is the great purpose of the New Testament may appear too obvious for illustration; but that this is the general design of the Old Testament also, may be shewn from its first few pages.

The *historical* part of the Old Testament is to be considered, not as a history of the world, not a history of the Jews, but such a selection from both as Infinite Wisdom saw to be best adapted to make mankind wise unto salvation.

It begins with an account of God's creating the world,

and of his forming man in his own image. This account was published at a time when nearly all mankind, except the Jews, were given up to idolatry, and when the Jews themselves were in the greatest danger of falling into it. The account of the Creation is therefore to be considered, as Bishop Butler has remarked, as an assertion, on the part of the One Great Moral Governor of the world, that it is His world; and that when it came from his hands it was very good.

But this account of the Creation, scarcely occupying more than one chapter, is evidently introductory to its main object, the announcement of man's *fall*, and the discovery of the means by which alone he could be *restored* to God's favour (Gen. iii.).

In what immediately follows, many hundred years of man's history are rapidly passed over, and only so much given as illustrates the awful effects of the *Fall*. Hence the account of Cain, and of the rapid progress of wickedness generally throughout the world; till, by the Deluge, God proclaimed to mankind, what Adam's sentence had failed to teach, how deeply man had fallen under the displeasure of his Maker: that, seeing how he rushed into sin, and involved himself in destruction, we might learn how much he needed a *Redeemer* to restore him to the Divine favour, and a *Sanctifier* to renew him unto holiness.

In the midst, however, of the darkness of this scene, such a selection of facts is made, as, faintly indeed, but really, holds out the *prospect of man's recovery*. Before the Deluge, this is seen in the *great promise* to Adam (Gen. iii. 15), and in its effect on his descendants Abel, Seth, Enos, Enoch, and Noah. They lived by faith on that promise (Heb. xi.); called on God (Gen. iv. 26); walked with Him (Gen. v. 24); found grace in His sight (Gen. vi. 8); through the merits of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 20; Rev. xiii. 8), and prefigured to them by *animal sacrifice* (Gen. iv. 4, with Heb. xi. 4). Not striving against (Gen. vi. 3), but, being led by the Holy Spirit, they were renewed in heart by him; and thus may be considered as the first-fruits of redemption.

We are told of the re-peopling of the world by Noah and his sons; and then of the building of the tower of Babel

(another terrible instance of the perverseness of man). After this, the general history of mankind is abandoned, and only so far glanced at as it bears on the history of a particular person, Abraham, and particular branches of his family, through whom the Saviour was in the fulness of time to come; and, even of Abraham and his family, only so much is recorded as bears on the one great purpose of man's salvation*.

Again: a part of the Old Testament is *prophetic*, but (as has been sufficiently shewn page 29) it is prophecy in relation to the same great purpose, to make us wise unto salvation. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. xix. 10).

Again: a part of the Old Testament, as the Psalms, is *devotional*; but then it is devotion as adapted to the recovery of a fallen being—to make us wise unto salvation, by teaching us how as sinners we may address God with suitable feelings and suitable language. Here the infinitely great and glorious God is presented to us as we ought to think of Him when we would pray to Him, or praise Him; here are open to our view the varied feelings, the joys and sorrows, of those sincerely struggling against sin; while interwoven with these is that which constantly points us to Christ, and which shews us our need of that Divine help which it is the great work of the Holy Spirit to impart (Ps. li. 10, 12; Ps. cxliii. 10).

The same general remarks apply to what may be called the *moral* or *preceptive* parts of the Old Testament, where the duties we owe to God and each other are enforced—for instance, the Ten Commandments.

These rules, applied to our conduct, shew the necessity of redemption by Christ. In the law of God we have a reflection of His character; and by a comparison of ourselves with that law is seen our own character (Rom. vii. 7; Gal. v. 4; Rom. x. 4. viii. 9); thus the Law becomes our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, and to feel the need of his Spirit.

As the Psalms are a heavenly guide to our intercourse with God, so are the Proverbs to our intercourse with men. The book of Job exhibits the afflictions of life; Ecclesiastes,

* For instance, from the time of Moses till the time of Solomon no mention is made in the Bible of the kings of Egypt; and Ishmael (though a son of Abraham) and his descendants are very soon unnoticed.

the vanity of its enjoyments. And the practical effect of them all is, to teach us, that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God our Saviour, Jesus Christ."—(Tit. ii. 12, &c.)

This general view of the purpose of God in giving the Bible, that, whether we regard its *historical*, *prophetical*, *devotional*, or *moral* parts, God had in all one object, to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, it is important should be deeply impressed upon the mind, if we wish either to inform ourselves or instruct others in the knowledge of its truths. It is the key to all its treasures.

To assist in the attainment of this object in reading the Bible, the following advice of Archbishop Secker may here be introduced.

After urging the necessity of mixing faith with what we read; of applying by prayer to Him whose gift, saving faith is; after reminding us of the excellent Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent, which is so suitable a prayer for the occasion; he says, "Let the reader stop, on fit occasions, and think, What consolation does this passage administer to me? what acknowledgment to Heaven doth this declaration require from me? what fear for myself doth this threatening call for? what duty doth this precept or pattern point out to me? of what sin doth it convince me? is my character and behaviour suitable to this command or exhortation, this description or good example? or do I see myself here, under another name, reproved, condemned, stigmatized? Have I acquired that sense of my own sinfulness and weakness, and of God's holiness and justice; of my need of the merits of Christ, and the grace of the Divine Spirit; which the whole tenor of Scripture inculcates? or am I still inclined to stand or fall by my own righteousness?"

The following are among the passages quoted by Bishop Butler, as expressing the chief parts of Christ's office as Mediator between God and man, and which is usually treated of under the three heads of prophet, priest, and king: 1 Tim. ii. 5 (one Mediator); John i.; viii. 12 (light of, &c.); Heb. ii. 14 (destroy, &c. devil); Gal. iii. 13 (redeemed from curse, &c.); Heb. ix. (put away sin by, &c.); 2 Cor. v. 18—21

(reconcile, &c.); Phil. ii. (highly exalted, &c.); Eph. iv. 8—13 with Acts ii. 4 (gift and agency of the Spirit); Heb. vii. (Intercessor, &c.); John xiv. 2 (gone to prepare, &c.); John iii. 35; 2 Thess. i. 8 (all judgment, &c., punish with, &c.); Rev. xi. 15 (He shall reign for ever); Rev. iii. 21 (His people sit on his throne, &c.); John v. 22, 23; Rev. v. 12, 13 (worthy the Lamb, &c.)

See also 1 Pet. i. 2, which contains the substance of the plan of salvation.

QUESTIONS ON CHAP. II.

What is that knowledge without which we know nothing to any good purpose; and where alone is that knowledge to be obtained? [p. 33.]

What do we learn, when taught just views of God and ourselves? (*Confirm this by a quotation from Scripture.*)

In what sense does the Bible shew us our disease and our remedy, and become our cure? [p. 35.]

Give the substance of Archbishop Secker's direction for the profitable reading of the Scriptures. [p. 38.]

Give some texts of Scripture explanatory of that which is the great subject of the Bible—namely, the mediation of Christ.

CHAP. III.

IN WHAT MANNER HAVE THE GREAT TRUTHS OF THE BIBLE BEEN REVEALED?

CONTENTS.—*Successive revelations to fallen man, the filling up of an outline at first given: illustrated in reference to—*§ i. *The nature and attributes of God.* § ii. *The character and prospects of man.* § iii. *The great work of man's redemption.*

“MEN are impatient,” says Bishop Butler, “and are for precipitating things; but God appears deliberate throughout his operations, accomplishing his ends by slow, successive steps. The change of the seasons—the ripening of the fruits of the earth—the very history of a flower—is an instance of this.”—So is the Bible.

The Bible is the record of God's revelations to man from the beginning; and presents to us this, as a distinguishing feature of those revelations,—that they are as the gradual filling up of an outline at first given—the expansion of a

seed containing within itself the elements of the future plant, as the acorn does of the oak (Matt. xiii. 31).

In the preceding chapter, p. 34, it is said that God gave us the Bible to teach (1) what He is and (2) what we are; and both these topics were considered as introductory to that which may be viewed as God's great design in the gift of the Holy Scriptures—(3) the making known that dispensation of mercy, through the Son and Holy Spirit, by which God can be just, and the Justifier of the Sinner (Rom. iii. 26); and the sinner, restored to the Divine favour and image, be thus qualified for the full enjoyment of God for ever (John xvii. 21).

It is now to be remarked, that the term "gradual" applies in some measure to each of these three topics; but that it applies chiefly to the third and last—namely, the great work of man's redemption.

§ i. *The nature and attributes of God revealed gradually.*

1. God revealed his nature gradually.—This is an overwhelming subject—the nature of God—to us, who know so little even of our own nature, and needs the deepest humility in the contemplation of it.

At the very beginning God clearly revealed the unity of his nature (Gen. i. 1); but for 4000 years afterwards God only indistinctly made known that in the unity of his nature there were three Persons.

Some intimation of this truth is given in the very first chapter of the first book of the Bible, where it is implied that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead, (Gen. i. 26) "Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, after *Our* likeness." Again iii. 22, "Man is become as one of *Us*:" and again, ch. xi. 7, "Let *Us* go down."

In other books of Scripture may be traced the same intimation, as Isa. vi. 3, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts;" with verse 8, "Who will go for *Us*," evidently calculated, as Dr. Smith remarks, to excite a remote conception in the mind of the original hearer or reader of a plurality of some kind in the Infinite Essence. See also Isa. xlviii. 16, translated by Lowth, "Now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me and his Spirit."

Again, a person is described in the Old Testament under various titles, particularly as the Angel of the Lord to whom

the name and attributes of Jehovah are given, yet represented as distinct from God and acting, as the term Angel imports, under a Divine commission. See Gen. xvi. 7, "The Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness," with verse 13, "And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, 'Thou God seest me.'" Moses calls him LORD*, i. e. *Jehovah*; and Hagar, God.

The Prophets dwell yet more distinctly on this, as for instance, Isa. ix. 6, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, THE MIGHTY GOD, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace;" evidently identifying this mysterious person with the promised Messiah.

So also while we must look to the New Testament for the full view of the person and office of the Holy Spirit, He is spoken of in the Old Testament in terms which imply his personality and office. Gen. i. 2. vi. 3; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2; Ps. li. 12. cxliii. 10; Isa. xlviii. 16. lxi. 1. lxiii. 10; Ezek. iii. 24, 27.

But the following passages compared together, remarkably shew how the germ of the great doctrine of the Trinity is discoverable in the Old Testament; Numb. vi. 24, 27, the Mosaic form, with 2 Cor. xiii. 14, the Apostolic form of blessing, and with Matthew xxviii. 19, the form of words appointed to be used by our Blessed Lord on baptism.

2. God revealed his attributes gradually.

By the attributes of God are here meant his power, wisdom, justice, goodness, &c.: and by these chiefly we describe what we mean by the character of God. In this sense, then, we remark, that the outline of that character may be traced in the first three chapters of Genesis, especially in God's first revelation to fallen man, as contained in the third chapter. It is essentially the same character as that presented to us throughout the Bible. But as we proceed, the character of God opens to our view; and this is particularly the case in the history of the Jews, one object of whose selection doubtless was (for God accomplishes many purposes by one act) the gradual display of his character to man (see Exod. vi. 3; xxxiv. 5). To them God gave, during a period of nearly 2000 years, many declarations

* Where Lord is printed in capital letters, it is in the original *Jehovah*, or self-existent independent Being.

respecting Himself—many laws, promises, threatenings—many sensible proofs of his government of them;—*stating in many instances the reasons of his conduct*: and these become so many illustrations of God's character, exhibiting in a great variety of lights his power, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, &c..

A peculiar, and to us inestimable value of the Bible, is, that it is such an accumulation of facts, selected by God himself, as enables us to trace events to their moral causes; that is, to the reasons which God, as Governor of the world, had in permitting them. These facts thus become "so many keys to open to us the path to the secret method by which He governs the world and us." In the ordinary course of God's providence, we know not (to use a Scriptural illustration) whether they on whom the tower of Siloam fell were or were not sinners above all the dwellers in Jerusalem; we are in great danger of tracing the event to a wrong cause, and in so doing may be led to act as well as think wrong on the subject, Judges xvii. 13, Micah; 1 Sam. xxiii. 7, Saul; 1 Sam. xxvi. 8, Abishai; Job iv. 7, Job's friends: Acts xxviii. 1—6; but when Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it (Judges ix. 52—56), and a certain woman cast a piece of millstone upon his head and brake his scull, and the Scriptures tell us, thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech which he did unto his father in slaying his seventy brethren; the moral cause of the event being given us by God himself, the event becomes a proof to us of God's justice in the punishment of sin, and a warning to every sinner that he may be sure that, sooner or later, his sin will find him out.

This is an instance of God's justice; others are given of his long-suffering, faithfulness to his promises, readiness to hear prayer, pardon sin, &c. (Ps. lxxviii., &c.), his exact notice of men's motives, and punishment of those he most loves, as in the case of Moses smiting the rock, of David numbering the people, and Hezekiah shewing his treasures. Illustrations are also given of his providence, calculated to inspire in those who serve him the greatest confidence in his protection. Of this the history of Joseph is a most striking display, shewing how God, without appearing in the least to disturb the ordinary course of men's actions, causes the worst evils to bring about the greatest good: the envy of Joseph's brethren, the false accusation of Potiphar's wife,

the unjust wrath of Potiphar, the imprisonment of Joseph, all contributing to that advancement by which God enabled him to become the saviour of the infant church from famine. And from many such facts, thus traced by God himself to their causes through the course of thousands of years, shewing what is pleasing or displeasing to him, and how he has acted towards others under every variety of circumstance in which we can be placed, we may learn how to behave towards him, and what to expect from him; for by his moral government in things temporal thus explained to us, God shews us the great principles upon which our eternal interests will be determined. That the history of the Jews was miraculous, does not render it less instructive to us in this respect; for miracles do not alter the principles upon which God acts; they only illustrate those principles in a more striking manner. The punishment of Uzziah by leprosy (2 Chron. xxvi. 19), and the deliverance of the three children of Israel from the fiery furnace, and of Daniel from the lions' den, were by miracle; but they are only more striking illustrations of a principle from which God never departs, and which shall be more fully developed in the great day, that "they that honour him he will honour, and they that despise him shall be lightly esteemed."

The foundation of all our knowledge of God, as derived from the Bible, is that He is unchangeable (Heb. xiii. 8); that what was pleasing or displeasing to him in any of his creatures—for instance, in Abel or Adam—6000 years ago, is equally so now. *Without respect of persons, he judges according to every man's work; and that by a rule which never varies:* from this great truth it follows, that "the method of God's dealing with any rational creature is the common concern of all." 2 Pet. ii. 4. But as by a long observation of his conduct, of what he says and does, especially if he condescend to acquaint us with his motives, we become gradually acquainted with the character of a fellow-creature, though he may have never varied in the principles of his conduct; so God, "with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning," may be said in the Bible to have made known his character *gradually* to man; till, in the fulness of time, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John i. 14): and in the Only-begotten Son, "who is in the bosom of the Father," we were called to see "the

light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6; John i. 18; xiv. 9).

Yet, with regard to this glorious manifestation of the Divine character, it may be truly said, "Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him!" Even here "we see through a glass, darkly." (Job xxvi. 14; 1 Cor. xiii.) But eternity is before us; and "increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. i. 10) will be, through eternity, the delightful employment of all those who are now seeking to know him as he is revealed in Christ, (compare John xvii. 3 with 2 Thess. i. 8,) presenting an awful contrast, and suggesting an urgent motive for self-examination.

§ ii. *The character and prospects of man revealed gradually.*

I. God revealed the character of man gradually.

The great fact upon which, as derived from the Bible, all our knowledge of ourselves depends, is, that "as in water face answereth to face, so does the heart of man to man" (Prov. xxvii. 19); in other words, that human nature is the same in all ages, whether viewed as fallen in Adam or renewed by Divine grace (Gen. v. 3, with John iii. 6). In this sense, Cain and Abel are, in the essential principles of their character, the representatives of the two great classes into which all mankind may be divided to the end of time (1 John iii. 10—12). But the outline at first given (Gen. iii. iv.) is made more distinct—is gradually filled up—by an accumulation of facts.

1. *Particular examples are given of the effects of God's grace.*

When it is said, Gen. v., "Enoch walked with God," this may be truly said to contain, as the acorn does the oak, the principle of all that is excellent in character. But in the Bible facts are accumulated illustrating this principle; details are given which exhibit the graces of God's spirit under every variety of circumstance. Passing by those which the world calls great events, and which are the usual subjects of history, while the mighty empires of Babylon and Nineveh (Gen. x. 10, 11), and the progress of the arts and sciences in Egypt, are overlooked; the domestic lives of obscure individuals—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Naomi and

Ruth, &c.—are presented to us ; because in these are illustrated the effects of God's grace on the human heart under circumstances where we most need the illustration of it—as parent, child, brother, husband and wife, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, master and servant, and the duties, the temptations, afflictions, &c. arising out of these relations. The character of Noah presents a bright example of perseverance in well doing. He appears, as Bishop Horne remarks, like the lily among thorns, diffusing its sweetness in the desert,—a light burning and shining in the blackness of darkness. In the character of Job we are taught patience ; in Moses, meekness ; in Caleb, decision. Hannah is a pattern to mothers ; Samuel and Josiah, to children ; Joseph, to young men ; Eliezer of Damascus, to servants ; Daniel, to those under authority ; Nehemiah, as a patriot, &c. ; Jonathan, as a friend and a brother, and not less so as a son towards a wicked father attempting the destruction of that friend and brother. David's conduct to Saul shews us how to overcome evil with good. So that there is *gradually* presented to us, embodied in the example of some one recorded in the Bible, an illustration of every duty to which we are called. Yet the New Testament pre-eminently illustrates this. It was reserved to the Gospel to shew the full influence of Divine grace in the perfect example of our Lord, in following “ the blessed steps of his most holy life.”

2. *Particular examples are given of the influence of sin.*

(1.) On the true servants of God.—The unbelief of the father of the faithful (Gen. xx.) ; the impatience of the most patient (Job iii.) ; the irritability of the meekest (Numb. xx.) ; the early, long-tried, eminent devotion of him who was so distinguished a type of the great Messiah, and yet his grievous fall (2 Sam. xi.) ; the wisest of men becoming an idolator (1 Kings xi.).

(2.) On the wicked.—Envy in Joseph's brethren (Gen. xxxvii.) ; hatred in Esau against Jacob (Gen. xxvii.) ; malice in Saul (1 Sam. xviii.) ; pride in Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv.) ; neglect of warnings in his grandson Belshazzar (Dan. v. 22) ; daring impiety in Pharaoh and Hiel (1 Kings xvi.), like Ahaz, trespassing yet more in their affliction ; capricious Ahasuerus ; indecisive Zedekiah (Jer. xxvii.) ; ambitious Adonijah, a spoiled child (1 Kings i.) ; headstrong Rehoboam (1 Kings xii.) ; worldly wise Ahithophel (2 Sam. xvii.) ;

hypocritical Johanan (Jer. xl. xlii.); Esau generous, yet profane (Gen. xxxii.); Pharaoh perverse, but at times relenting (Exod. ix. 27); Orpah's exemplary conduct to Naomi, although clinging to idolatry (Ruth i.).

Such examples are given as illustrate;

(3.) The progress of sin; as in Saul and Amaziah.

(4.) The vain excuses made for the commission of sin; as in the case of Adam and Eve (Gen. iii.), and Aaron. (Exod. xxxii.).

(5.) The self-deceit which accompanies sin; as in Balaam (Numb. xxii., xxiv.: "Let me die the death of," &c., Numb. xxiii. 10, at the very moment he was running greedily after the wages of unrighteousness, 2 Pet. ii.; Jude 11).

(6.) The prejudices which oppose the reception of truth; as in Naaman. (2 Kings v.)

(7.) The force of habit.—Ahab's humiliation (1 Kings xxi.), Joash weeping by the dying bed of Elisha (2 Kings xiii.), yet returning to their idolatry.

(8.) The corrupt motives of right conduct; as in Jehu destroying the prophets of Baal (2 Kings x.; Hosea i. 4).

(9.) The restraint of circumstances on human depravity, and how it breaks out when that restraint is removed—as Hazael, when raised to a throne; and Joash, king of Judah, after the death of his uncle Jehoiada.

(10.) The evil of ungodly connexions (Gen. vi. 2). These ungodly marriages were the first step towards the corruption of the church, and the ruin of mankind; so Jehoshaphat's connexion with Ahab by the marriage of his son with Athaliah nearly led to the destruction of his whole family; and if Ahab had not had Jezebel for his wife, he might never have been guilty of the murder of Naboth. (2 Kings viii. 26. xi. 1; 1 Kings xxi. 7.)

3. *General views are given of human nature.*

(1.) Thus, immediately before the Deluge, it is said (Gen. vi. 5), "Every imagination," &c.; and again, immediately after (Gen. viii. 21, &c.), "evil from youth." In Job, written 800 years after the Deluge, it is said (ch. xv. 16), that man is filthy and abominable. David, 500 years after this (Ps. xiv. 2), Jeremiah, 500 years after David (ch. xvii. 9), Paul, 500 years after Jeremiah (Rom. iii.), give the same view.

(2.) And these general views are illustrated in the Bible on a great scale in the history of the Jews. For many hundreds of years made the objects of God's peculiar care—a people miraculously governed—instructed by inspired teachers—entrusted with the oracles of God—enriched in every way by such extraordinary privileges (Deut. iv. 33; Isai. v. 1, &c.)—in their abuse of these privileges, generation after generation, we see melancholy proof indeed of that corruption which has been entailed on mankind. 1 Cor. x. 11. (See Gray's Key to the Old Testament, p. 144.)

(3.) But was not the full developement of human depravity reserved to the great crisis of man's redemption—individually in Judas, collectively in the Jews as a nation;—denying the Holy One and the Just; desiring a murderer to be granted to them; killing the Prince of life; and, after his resurrection, trampling under foot the blood of the Cross, and doing despite to the Spirit of Grace?

Thus to us, who have the whole record of God's will, with what accumulated proof is our natural depravity confirmed!

II. God revealed the prospects of man gradually.

(1.) *The prospects of the righteous were revealed gradually.*

In righteous Abel, the *first* recorded victim to death, was declared from the beginning that this fallen world was no longer intended to be the scene of man's happiness; but that there remained a rest for the people of God. In Enoch's translation, scarcely 50 years after the death of Adam, was shadowed forth the glorification of the body; that this corruption would put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality. Under the Old Testament dispensation, the Patriarchs looked for a better, even a heavenly country (Heb. xi. Gen. xlix. 18; Job xix. 25), their unsettled lives constantly impressing upon them the need of such a rest. That the dead are raised, Moses shewed at the bush (Luke xx. 37, 38). 600 years after Moses, and more than 2000 years after the translation of Enoch, the church was again cheered, in the translation of Elijah, by the dawning of the same glorious hope. The Prophets spoke of it with more distinctness (Ps. xvii. 15; Hosea xiii. 14; Dan. xii. 1—3); but life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel (2 Tim. i.

10; 1 Cor. xv.; Phil. iii. 21): till then, eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor had it entered into the heart of man to conceive what good things God had prepared for them that love him, and which he then revealed by the Spirit. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

(2.) *The prospects of the wicked were revealed gradually.*

As to the punishment awaiting the wicked in a future state, while traces of it are discernible from the beginning (Job xxi. 30; Ps. ix. 17; Dan. xii. 2; Jude 14.), it is to the Gospel, to the declarations of our Blessed Lord, (Matt. xiii. 41. xxv. 41—46; Mark ix. 44; Luke xvi. 23,) and of his apostles, (Rom. ii.; 2 Thess. i. 8; Heb. x. 29; 2 Pet. iii.) we must turn for the full detail of that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, which shall be the eternal portion of the finally impenitent (Rom. i. 18); and it is indeed an awful fact, that the most fearful denunciations of wrath to come are from the lips of the Saviour (Luke xii. 48; John iii. 19).

§ iii. *The great work of man's redemption revealed gradually.*

With the gradually accumulating illustrations of God's holiness and man's depravity, confirming man's need of redemption, the Bible gradually unfolded the nature of that redemption. When this illustration was complete, that redemption came—4000 years after the Fall;—yet to Him whose understanding is infinite, to God, the only wise, this was "the fulness of time." (Gal. iv.)

To understand how this dispensation was given gradually, the following view may be taken of the Old and New Testament.

1. In the Old Testament is the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

2. The New Testament presents to us our Blessed Lord in our nature; actually come; purchasing that salvation; through the Holy Spirit unfolding its whole plan; illustrating its effects on mankind when thus unfolded; and, by prophecy, continuing the history of those effects to the consummation of all things.

1. In the Old Testament is the preparation made for the

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour.—The manner in which it pleased God to make this preparation for the coming of our Lord was chiefly by *prophecy* and *type*.

A type has been defined to be a prefigurative action or occurrence, in which one event, person, or circumstance is intended to represent another, similar to it in certain respects, but future. The Scriptures describe a type as “a shadow of good things to come” (Heb. x. 1)—a *shadow*, of which the body is Christ (Col. ii. 17). Shadows are not exact resemblances, but give only a dark outline; yet with sufficient distinctness to convey some general idea of the body, especially when afterwards we have the body with which to compare them. One distinction between a prophecy and a type is, that prophecy is a prediction by something said—a type, usually by something done, or presented to our senses.

The first revelation to fallen man contained, as has been already hinted (p. 39, 40), a prophetic declaration of mercy, which was an outline of the whole plan; or as a seed, containing within itself the elements of the future plant.

The first recorded act of acceptable worship after the Fall was connected with a type; expressing by an action what the first prophecy had declared by words.

The prophecy to Adam, Gen. iii. 15, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, &c. intimated the triumph of the Messiah, though not without suffering to himself. Abel's sacrifice of a lamb shadowed forth that which was the great purpose of the Messiah's coming—the putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, the innocent substitute for guilty man. The act of approaching God by slaying an innocent animal could not have been suggested to any pious mind, as in itself an acceptable mode of worship; but it is immediately seen how, as a Divine appointment in reference to the Messiah, it was suited to impress on sinful man, in the innocent thus suffering for his guilt, that the wages of sin was death—that more than repentance was necessary to forgiveness—that without shedding of blood was no remission: while the impossibility of the blood of a lamb taking away sin, would teach the offerer to look forward to His coming (the Seed of the woman) whose merits could alone give value to such an offering. The

confirmation of this is in the fact, that in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 4) Abel is said to have offered his sacrifice in *faith*; that is, it was not will-worship, but offered in reliance on a Divine command: whereas Cain's, being will-worship, was rejected.

But while this prophecy and this type may be said to have formed the groundwork of Revealed Religion till the coming of the Messiah, the great truths hid under these mysteries were brought gradually more and more to light by other prophecies and other types.

From Gen. iii. to Exod. xx., a period of about 2500 years, we find but few prophecies and types. This period—from Adam to Moses—has been called the *Patriarchal Dispensation*.

By the word Patriarch is meant the head of a family, who, in those early ages, was the supreme governor of it, both in civil and religious matters. Such were Adam, Seth, Enos, Enoch, Noah, before the Flood; Job, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons, after the Flood.—By the word Dispensation is here meant some particular way in which God deals with his creatures.

This period of 2500 years is called the Patriarchal Dispensation, because God carried on the preparation for the coming of the Messiah as the Saviour of the world by means of these individuals, who, in the midst of a wicked world, constituted His church. These became the guardians of prophecy; and their history, as well as worship, was in some respects typical.—See Jude 14 (Enoch); 1 Pet. iii. 21; Gen. viii. 20 (Noah); Heb. v. vii. (Melchizedek); Job xix. 25 (Job); but more particularly Gen. xii. 3, &c.; xxvi. 4. xlix. 10 (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah). It is observable that in the patriarchal dispensation may be traced the dawn of the Mosaic. This appears in reference to that great rite of sacrifice which was the distinguishing characteristic of both. In the solemn covenant which God made with Abraham (Gen. xv.) every animal commanded or allowed to be sacrificed under the Mosaic law is here mentioned (see Gen. xv. 9). And even in the time of Noah a distinction was made of clean and unclean animals in reference to sacrifice; while the intention of sacrifice, as a means of turning away God's anger, is evidently implied

in God's command to Job respecting his friends (Job xlii. 7, 8), and in the domestic practice of Job himself (Job i. 5).

But in the covenant made through Moses with the Jewish people, about 1500 years before the coming of our Blessed Lord—called the *Mosaic Dispensation*—the intention of animal sacrifice was more distinctly explained (Lev. i. 4. vi. 2—7. xvi. 21. xvii. 11): many other types were instituted—typical persons, places, things.

The Jewish people were formed into a typical nation (1 Cor. x.; Epistle to Hebrews throughout), both by their religious institutions and history. Prophecies were increased both in number and clearness. (See those of Balaam, Numb. xxiv., and Moses.)

While from Samuel to Malachi (Acts iii. 24), a period of about 600 years, a succession of prophets were sent, who gradually unfolded, with more distinctness than Moses had done, the person and office of the Messiah, and the great doctrines of the Gospel. They searched what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (1 Pet. i. 11); particularly by the outpouring of the Spirit upon the church, as the fruit of his ascension (Ps. lxxviii. 18, with Acts ii. 33; also Joel ii. 28).

A comparison of the book of Isaiah with the Pentateuch will illustrate this; particularly Deut. xviii. 15—the clearest prophecy in the Pentateuch respecting the Messiah—with Isaiah liii. &c.

By these means, chiefly, the impression of the coming of the Messiah was from age to age preserved. As these accumulated, it was deepened; and such was the result, that we have the confirmation of two heathen historians, Suetonius and Tacitus, to the fact, that at the time of our blessed Lord's appearing there was a general expectation, not only among the Jews, but throughout the East, that some Great Person should come into the world. See Hag. ii. 7.

Thus the Old Testament prepared for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour.

It was a light of hope—cherishing, for thousands of years, the expectation of the world's deliverance.

. *It was a light of evidence*—proving, in our Lord's fulfilment of its prophecies and types, that He was that Deliverer.

2. The New Testament presents to us our blessed Lord in our nature ; actually come ; purchasing that salvation ; by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit unfolding its whole plan ; illustrating, by facts, its effects on mankind when thus unfolded ; and, through prophecy, continuing the history of those effects to the consummation of all things.

(1.) In the *Gospels* is the account of our blessed Lord, by his obedience unto death, purchasing that salvation, after having, by his miracles, &c., proved he was the promised Saviour, and in his preaching *touched* on all the great doctrines of salvation.

(2.) In the *Acts* are facts illustrating the effects of that salvation, when *fully* preached and applied by the Holy Spirit, in the establishment of the Christian church, uniting Jew and Gentile on one foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

(3.) In the *Epistles* are clearly unfolded the doctrines of that salvation, as fully preached by the Apostles in the *Acts*.

(4.) In the *Revelation of St. John* the work of prophecy is continued ; and as in the *Acts* are seen the effects of that salvation in the *establishment* of the Christian church, so in *this book* is traced its *progress* till the consummation of all things.

Thus is the Christian dispensation presented to us as "the master-piece of the Divine Providence ; that point in which all the lines of God's manifold wisdom meet, as in their centre," Eph. iii. 10. (See Lowth's *Directions for Reading the Scriptures*.)

What a view this subject gives us of the harmony of the Bible with itself, especially of the doctrines of the Bible with its facts ! The great doctrine of the Bible, as has been already noticed (page 38), is the atonement and mediation of a Divine Person—the Messiah, in order to the recovery of the world. And is not the preparation made in the Old Testament for his coming answerable to so great an object ? Are we not prepared in some measure, by the types and prophecies announcing the Messiah in the Old Testament,

for the coming of no less a person than Him who is declared in the New Testament to be God manifest in the flesh?

“For what manner of person must he be who shall answer all the expectation raised from age to age of his appearance? How powerful must this Seed of the woman be, who shall bruise the serpent’s head, the ancient deceiver of mankind! How happy this Seed of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed! How wonderful the Prophet who shall perfect and complete the Law given at Mount Sinai, and ordained by angels! How mighty the Prince who shall sit on the throne of David for ever, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end! How majestic the Angel of the Covenant, of whose coming to the temple such things were spoken! . . . The temple built and adorned by Solomon was still richer in heavenly gifts, when the precious stones of Aaron’s breast-plate shone with an oracular brightness, and a cloud, the symbol of the Divine presence, overshadowed the mercy-seat. Yet we are assured that the glory of the latter house, though destitute of these, shall be greater than that of the former. Who, then, is He whose presence shall thus ennoble this temple? Who is this King of Glory, who shall enter into our gates with all the honours upon him which Heaven before divided among its favoured sons: whom Adam represented as the Father of mankind; Melchizedek, as a priest of the Most High God; Moses, as a Mediator between God and man; Joseph, as a Saviour; David, as a shepherd of his people, a ruler, and a king? Who can this King of Glory be—promised to all ages—proclaimed by all inspired prophets—prefigured by all great examples? who, but the Lord, even the Lord of Hosts, Himself; Emmanuel, or God with us?”—*Townson*.

And such He is declared to be, Matt. i. 23.

In the view of such elaborate preparations for our happiness, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

QUESTIONS ON CHAP. III.

Why is the history of the Jews, as recorded in the Bible, of such importance to us? [pp. 42 & 47.]

Though men’s different circumstances may alter the mode of God’s dealing with them, what views do the Scriptures give of His character, which shew God never alters the principles on which He acts towards them? [p. 43.]

To understand how the great work of man's redemption was revealed gradually, what view may be taken of the Old and New Testament? [pp. 48, 51 & 52.]

What makes the neglect of salvation so dangerous?

CHAP. IV.

ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *The terms used in speaking of God.* § ii. *Application to ourselves of Scripture examples.* § iii. *On the interpretation of Doctrines, of Promises, &c.* § iv. *Prophecy.* § v. *Types.* § vi. *Parables.* § vii. *Importance of comparing Scripture with Scripture.* § viii. *Words used in different senses.* § ix. *Proper names. Value of some knowledge of—* § x. *Geography,* § xi. *Natural History,* § xii. *Chronology,* § xiii. *Profane History,* § xiv. *Manners and Customs of Eastern Nations, &c.* § xv. *On the difficulties and seeming contradictions of the Bible.* § xvi. *Quotations illustrating the leading object of this chapter.*

IN this chapter, as in every other part of the work, hints are all that can be offered—hints, the effect of which, it is hoped, may be to awaken inquiry; to make the reader feel how vast the subject is; how little has been told of it; and, therefore, with what humility and diligence he must himself apply to the study of God's word, searching as for hidden treasure (Prov. ii. 1—6).

§ i. *On the terms used in speaking of God.*

As we have remarked, that the foundation of all right knowledge in religion, and therefore of all right conduct, is laid in just views of God, some remarks are necessary, as an assistance to the interpretation of the passages of Scripture which speak of God.

1. Let it be deeply impressed upon the mind,—that it is from the Scriptures, and the Scriptures alone, we derive just views of God; that as the design of all Scripture is to make us wise unto salvation, it gives us such a view of God's character as is adapted to that object, and no further; that the Scriptures pursue that object in a manner suited to the capacities of mankind at large.

Condescending to the feebleness of our conceptions, they give, because we are not capable of higher views, such representations of God as are borrowed chiefly from ourselves, from our nature and manner of acting. For instance,—

Rev. xx. 12. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened—and the dead were judged out of those things written in the books." Men, owing to the imperfection of their knowledge and of their memories, make use of books, but God's infinite knowledge requires no such assistance. This is spoken merely in allusion to human proceedings.—Mal. iii. 16. "A book of remembrance was written before the Lord for them that feared him and that thought upon his name." This is a beautiful allusion to the records kept by kings (Esth. vi. 1).—Jer. vii. 13, &c. "I spake unto you rising up early and speaking," a figure of speech signifying that God had done this as a matter of great importance in which he was much interested; because persons usually rise early to prosecute such business as they are earnestly engaged in.

God is said to smell a sweet savour, as Gen. viii. 21. And again; 2 Cor. ii. 15. "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish." This is nothing but a Hebrew phrase drawn from the law of sacrifices, to express God's acceptance of the services of his sincere worshippers.

When the Scriptures speak of God, they sometimes ascribe hands, eyes, and feet to Him—not that He has any of these members: "God is a spirit:" but the meaning is, that He has a power to execute all those acts to the effecting of which these parts in us are instrumental. So we read of "the arm of the Lord," to express his power, because in man power is chiefly shewn by the arm.

Again: the Scriptures, borrowing illustrations and comparisons from ourselves, speak of God as having human affections and feelings. Thus, Gen. vi. "It repented the Lord that he had made man," &c.; "it grieved him," &c. When men repent of any thing, they no longer find pleasure in it; they undo, destroy it. Thus would God teach us how sin separates between us and him; and how man by sin becomes altogether unprofitable. We must not, by such expressions, think any thing happened which God had not anticipated, or that he feels grief as we do: "known unto God are all his works from the beginning." See also Prov. xvi. 4.

Again: the Scriptures declare, Dan. iv. 35, "God doth what he will," &c.: and, Rom. ix. 21, "Hath not the potter

power over the clay?" &c. God would impress on us, by this view of his character, the most entire submission; acquiescence of mind in what He does, either to us or others. But we are not for one moment to think that God acts as men usually do when they can do as they will, i. e. act capriciously, arbitrarily. Every act of God is the result of the combined exercise of every attribute of his nature—infinite wisdom, justice, goodness. "His tender mercies are over all his works."

So, again, we read of God "swearing," "confirming by an oath" (Heb. vi. 17). "Because among men it is the most solemn and awful way in which they declare the certainty of what they say, therefore this form of expression is intended to make a deeper impression, and produce a firmer confidence in us towards God."

So, again, Gen. xviii. 21, "I will go down and see," &c. "In this passage, God speaks after the manner of men, using the language of a good judge, who never passes sentence, much less executes it, till he has examined the cause."

So, again, Exod. iv. 21. ix. 16, God is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart; that is, God permitted those temptations which, from the corrupt state of Pharaoh's heart, did harden it. "The hardness of clay, no less than the softness of wax, is ascribed to the sun; yet the sun's producing this effect is entirely owing to the qualities of the object on which he shines." Thus it is with the temptations which God permits. Abraham's temptation (Gen. xxii.) confirmed his faith; Pharaoh's, his impiety.

2. The utmost care must be taken not to set one view of God's character in opposition to another, but to view the different representations of it as calling us to distinct duties—submission, confidence, fear, love, &c.—all necessary to the perfection of Christian character. Is the Saviour infinite in mercy? He is also a just God, and a Saviour infinitely holy.

3. "Let us not expect to have the like information concerning the Divine conduct as concerning our duty."

For instance: ask not why God permitted sin to enter the world; but, what you, as a sinner, must do to escape from its consequences.

"Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade

far into the doings of the Most High; whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of His name, yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know Him not as indeed He is, neither can know Him; and our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence, when we confess, without confession, that His glory is inexplicable, His greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above, and we upon earth; therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few."—*Hooker, Eccles. Polity, Book i. Sect. 2.*

§ ii. *On the application to ourselves of the examples of Scripture.*

One of the most important means by which the Scriptures instruct us, is by the example of others. But some caution is necessary in the application. For instance:—

1. The cases may not be parallel.

"Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" said Jezebel to Jehu (2 Kings ix. 30), inferring from this that success could not attend his enterprise; but Jehu had a Divine warrant—Zimri had not—and it may here be remarked, that an express command from God alters, as Bishop Butler says, the whole nature of the case and of the action; as for instance, Abraham offering up his son, and Joshua destroying the Canaanites. (See Butler's Analogy, Part ii. Chap. 3.)

What was fit for Elijah to do under the Law (1 Kings xviii. 40; 2 Kings i.), was not fit for James and John to do under the Gospel (Luke ix. 54). Again:

2. The silence of Scripture in not condemning any particular act—as, for instance, the massacre of the people of Jabesh-gilead (Judges xxi.), and David's deceit to Ahimelech (1 Sam. xxi.)—can never be construed into an approbation, or even palliation, of the act; as it elsewhere furnishes the principles by which to condemn them, and often shews the sinfulness of the act, by recording its evil consequences—a remark which may be extended to polygamy.

3. Let it ever be borne in mind, that while the character of others is to be estimated by the circumstances by which they were surrounded, our duty is to be estimated in reference to the light we enjoy. As our light is greater, so are our responsibilities (Heb. x. 28, 29).

§ iii. *On the Interpretation of the Doctrines, Promises, Precepts, &c., of Scripture.*

1. To ascertain whether you rightly understand ANY DOCTRINE, compare the inferences you would draw from it, with those drawn in Scripture.

For instance: the Scriptures declare that repentance (Acts v. 31), faith (Ephes. ii. 8), obedience (1 Peter i. 2; Ephes. ii. 10), are the gift of God.

Do we infer that it is therefore needless to exhort men to repentance, faith, obedience? The Scriptures abound with such exhortations (Mark i. 15); see Acts viii. 22, Peter's exhortation to Simon Magus, and his address to the murderers of our Lord, Acts iii. 19. They charge the guilt of not repenting entirely upon men. (See Matt. xi. 20, 21; Rev. ii. 21, 22.) To prepare the heart to serve God is commanded as a duty; not to do so, is to do evil, because men labour under no other inability than disinclination. Contrast Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xix. 3, with Rehoboam, 2 Chron. xii. 14; and observe Samuel's exhortation to the Israelites, 1 Sam. vii. 3.

The Scriptures declare, "We are justified freely by grace" (Rom. iii. 23, 24); "not by works," &c. (Tit. iii. 5, &c.)

Do we infer that justification by faith alone weakens the obligation to good works? The Scriptures throughout insist on the necessity of good works, and draw from this very doctrine the strongest motives to obedience (see Rom. xii. 1).

2. Particularly observe the practical object with which every doctrine of Scripture is introduced, the duty to which it calls us, and the motive it supplies for the discharge of it. Doctrines are the great motives to duty.

The latter chapters of the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians will illustrate this. A reference to the following texts will shew how doctrines most mysterious in their nature are, in the connexion in which the Scriptures present them, most practical in their use. The clearest declarations of that awful and deeply mysterious fact, that through the offence of one, judgment has come upon all men to condemnation, is in Rom. v.; but the connexion in which it appears is no less remarkable—it is to magnify the grace of God in

our redemption by Christ, Rom. v. 15—20. The Deity, Incarnation, Atonement of Christ, are urged, not only as the foundation of all our hopes as sinners, but as the strongest motives even to those duties we owe to our fellow-creatures.

Phil. ii. 3 : " Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind," &c. The motive urged is, the condescension of Christ in his incarnation, &c. " Let this mind be in you, which," &c.... " who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but," &c. 1 John iv. 10 : " Herein is love...sent his Son...propitiation," &c. ; and this is urged as a motive why we should love one another : " Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought," &c. A forgiving spirit (Ephes. iv. 32), benevolence to the poor (2 Cor. viii. 9), and duties of husband and wife (Eph. v. 25), are urged by the same great motive—the love of Christ in dying for us. Thus shewing, that *he who slights the doctrines of Christianity undermines its morality*. See also 1 Cor. vi. 19. " What, know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" urged as a dissuasive from fornication. So, again, the doctrine of the Trinity is presented to us, not only as the foundation of our faith, but as an introduction to (Matt. xxviii. 19, baptizing, &c.), and as furnishing the ceaseless supply of, all our blessings (2 Cor. xiii. 14, the grace of our, &c.). The Scriptures present this doctrine to us as such a revelation of God as is exactly adapted to our state as sinners, to lead us to himself, and to make us humble and holy.

We must receive God's PROMISES in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture.

For instance: while it says, " No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John vi. 44) ; the promise is, " Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

" The secret will of God, let us be assured, is no contradiction of His revealed will ; no reserve upon it, tending to frustrate and nullify its purport."

" All the promises of God are, in Christ, yea and amen" (2 Cor. i. 20), that is, absolutely certain.

In the interpretation of temporal promises in the Old Testament—as, for instance, “Not afraid for pestilence,” &c. (Ps. xci. 6)—some limitation is necessary in their application to Christians, from the peculiarity of that dispensation, where, life and immortality not having been brought to light, temporal blessings were more directly appointed to express God’s favour, and to be shadows of good things to come. In Jonathan, that was an instance of exalted faith which would in us be daring presumption (1 Sam. xiv. 6); because he had the warrant of a special promise made to the Israelites (Deut. xxxii. 30), which in our case applies only to our spiritual and not to our temporal enemies.

The following passages may throw some light on the practical use we should make of the promises.

“Make you a new heart,” &c. (Ezek. xviii. 31.) “A new heart will I give,” &c. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26). “I will yet for this be inquired of” (Ezek. xxxvi. 37): shewing the connexion between the precept, the promise, and the prayer.

Though Nathan had told David that his sin was forgiven, yet David prays earnestly to be delivered from blood-guiltiness, Ps. li. 14. God had said, 1 Kings xviii. 1, “I will send rain upon the earth,” yet (verse 42), Elijah must pray for what God had promised.

When Daniel knew the seventy years’ captivity was expiring, then he set his face to seek by prayer its promised accomplishment (Dan. ix. 3). So, Acts i. 4, our Lord’s promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, in connexion with verse 14, shews they continued in prayer and supplication till its fulfilment. It was no distrust of God which led Paul, though he had a direct promise from God that he should see Rome (Acts xxiii. 11), to use all the means in his power for the preservation of his life, when afterwards he heard of a conspiracy against him to assassinate him at Jerusalem, where he then was. In the account of his shipwreck (Acts xxvii.), after assuring the crew, as God had promised that there should be no loss of life among them (verse 22), there was no inconsistency in his afterwards saying, “except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved,” because he knew that in the fulfilment of God’s promises, *the means are ordained to the end*. “Having, therefore,

these promises, let us cleanse ourselves," &c. (2 Cor. vii. 1.) "If ye forgive not, &c., neither, &c., forgive you?" (Matt. vi. 14, 15). "I said indeed, &c., but now be it far from me;" &c. (1 Sam. ii. 30.) David's dying advice to Solomon: "If thou seek, &c., be found, &c. if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever" (1 Chron. xxviii. 9). "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee" (Joshua i. 5) as applied Heb. xiii. 5, is very important, as shewing that God's promises to individuals are recorded in Scripture for the encouragement of God's people in every age.

Are promises addressed to character? Then examine yourself, as to whether you are of that character to which the particular promise is made. Do you desire Abraham's blessing? Walk in the steps of Abraham's faith (Rom. iv. ; see also Heb. iv. 1). Do you wish to be remembered with the favour which God bears to his people? seek that poor and contrite spirit with which the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, hath promised to dwell. Isa. lvii. 15. lxvi. 1.

God's THREATENINGS against Nineveh (Jonah iii. 4) and against the church at Ephesus (Rev. ii. 5), remarkably illustrate the intention of God's threatenings; which is, that we may avoid the evils which are threatened; see also Judges x. 13, with 16. Yet the present state of Nineveh and the church at Ephesus no less remarkably illustrate, that "Verily He is a God that judgeth the earth." 1 Sam. iii. 12.

To comprehend the full extent of the *Ten Commandments*, remarks Archbishop Secker, it will be requisite to observe the following rules.

1. When any sin is forbidden in them, the opposite duty is intended to be enjoined; and when any duty is enjoined, the opposite sin is forbidden. The Third Commandment, "Thou shalt not take," &c., requires that we think and speak reverently of God.

2. When the highest degree of any thing evil is prohibited, whatever is faulty in the same kind, though in a lower degree, is prohibited. This is illustrated by our Lord's interpretation of the Sixth and Seventh Commandments: "Whosoever is angry, &c., without cause," &c. (Matt. v. 22); and again, ver. 28, "whosoever looketh on, &c. adultery," &c.

3. Where one instance of virtuous behaviour is commanded, every other that hath the same nature and the same reason for it, is understood to be commanded also. The command, "Honour thy father," &c. includes the reciprocal duties of all superiors and inferiors, magistrates, masters, &c.

4. What we are expected to abstain from, we are expected to avoid, as far as we can, all temptations to it and occasions of it : and what we are expected to practise, we are expected to use all fit means that may better enable us to practise it. All that we are bound to do ourselves, we are bound, on fitting occasions, to exhort and assist others to do, when it belongs to them ; and all that we are bound not to do, we are to tempt nobody else to do, but keep them back from it as we have opportunity.

A distinction has been made between moral precepts and positive institutions. In moral precepts and duties, besides the will and command of God to oblige us, there are the nature and reason of things to engage us to obey ; whereas in positive institutions we cannot so readily apprehend the reason of the thing, and obey only because we are commanded. On this subject it may be remarked that *things otherwise indifferent become very important when made the subject of prohibition or command.*

Abraham and the Patriarchs worshipped in groves (Gen. xxi. 33), and without sin : but after the command given Deut. xvi. 21, "Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord thy God," it would have been very sinful to do so. Of circumcision St. Paul says to the Gentile Galatians, (Gal. v. 2) "if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing," nor was it any longer binding on the Jews. Yet before the coming of Christ it was written, Gen. xvii. 14, "That soul shall be cut off from his people" that should remain uncircumcised. Thus whether to set apart one day, or any particular day or days, in six, or in seven, or in eight, as a Sabbath, might appear unimportant had there been no express command, but the command having fixed the duty to *one day in seven*, it becomes a matter of great moment. The same remark applies to the Sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Our Lord having commanded the use of baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19; John iii. 5), and enjoined the commemoration of his

death till he come again, in partaking of the symbols of bread and wine (Luke xxii. 19), the consequences of the abuse or neglect of these ordinances become very dangerous.

For further remarks on Positive Institutions, see Butler's Analogy.

§ iv. *On the Interpretation of Prophecy.*

The language of Prophecy is very figurative, and this circumstance may properly introduce some remarks on the subject of FIGURES.

Figures abound in every language, but particularly in Scripture. Very many errors in religion, and those of the most serious consequence, arise from not distinguishing what is figurative from what is literal: for instance, the doctrine of transubstantiation, founded on taking a passage of Scripture (Matt. xxvi. 26, "this is my body," &c.) in a literal, which was meant by our Lord in a figurative, sense, has led to the martyrdom of many hundreds of God's people. The importance, therefore, of attention to the interpretation of figures is obvious.

Some degree of resemblance is essential to the correctness of every figure.

We call that figurative language, says Bishop Lowth, in which one or more images or words are substituted in room of others, or are introduced by way of illustration on the principle of resemblance. Thus,

"Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree" (Isa. lv. 13); these terms, thorn, fir-tree, &c., are used as images, substituted in the room of others, and on the principle of resemblance. By the thorn and the brier, useless, and even injurious, are meant the wicked; by the fir-tree and myrtle, fragrant, useful, ornamental, are meant the just. This, then, is the meaning, when the ideas intended to be conveyed by these figures are expressed in language not figurative, "Instead of the wicked shall arise the just, and instead of sinners such as fear to sin."

The following remarks will in some measure illustrate the figurative language adopted by the Prophets, as founded on the principle of resemblance.

That which is great in nature, is adopted to express that which is dignified and important among men.

The sun, moon, stars, mountains, hills, stately trees, denote kingdoms, or those in great authority, as kings, &c. : see Isaiah ii. 13, &c., where fortresses and ships are taken metaphorically, as well as high trees and lofty mountains—ships of Tarshish referring to rich merchants.

The creation of a new heaven and a new earth, means the setting up of a new dispensation of religion; thus (Isaiah lxxv. 17.), "Behold, I create," &c.; refers to the Gospel dispensation.

Great convulsions in nature refer to great political revolutions: the blackening of the sun; turning the moon into blood; falling of stars; seas, rivers, turned into blood; earthquakes; removal of islands, mountains; drying-up of rivers, &c.

See Jer. iv. 23, "I beheld the earth, &c., mountains," &c., a passage which gives, by the use of figurative language, a most pathetic and awful view of the approaching desolations of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar: see also Isaiah xiii. 10, 13, a most sublime prophecy of the destruction of Babylon: see also Matt. xxiv. 29. Acts ii. 19, referring to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and Rev. viii. 12, a prophecy of the extinction of the Roman empire by the Heruli and Ostrogoths.

What fertilizes and refreshes in nature, is applied to spiritual blessings—dew, gentle showers, still-running water, streams, fountains, &c. (Isa. xxxv. 6.) and Hosea xiv. 5, "I will be as dew to Israel;" *i. e.* by bestowing upon them his Holy Spirit, to refresh and strengthen their souls. See also John iv. 13, 14. vii. 37—39.

The different qualities of animals are also used figuratively; birds, beasts of prey, as emblems of tyrants.

The rising and breaking of a horn, refers to the rise and desolation of a state. Daniel makes frequent use of this figure (see chap. viii).

Light and darkness express joy, sorrow, prosperity, adversity, knowledge, ignorance, holiness, sin.

The occupations and relations of life furnish many figures. Vineyard denotes a church—and if with broken enclosures, a corrupt church: so also a vine bearing sour grapes.

Marriage is used to denote our covenant with God; adultery, our departure from God by idolatry. Hosea makes a bold use of this figure.

The description of nations as given in prophetic language is commonly by putting those parts which are nearest the Holy Land for the whole or all beyond them : thus Ps. xlv. 12, "And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift," a prophecy foretelling the accession of the Gentiles to the church, because Tyre was a city in the neighbourhood of Palestine, and formerly the glory of nations and mart of the world. The prophecy in Isa. lx. 6 (referring to countries next Judea eastward) denotes the accession of the Eastern world; as verse 9 (describing the ships of Tarshish) refers to that of the Western world to the church of God.

Many figures are borrowed from the religious services of the Jews.

Thus the conversion of Egypt to the Gospel is foretold (Isa. xix. 19—21), by *setting up an altar*, and *offering sacrifices to the Lord*. Again, referring to the Gospel times, when the Gentiles shall be converted, it is said (Mal. i. 11), in *every place incense shall be offered*, that is, devout prayer (Rev. v. 8). The service of God under the Gospel is set forth (Zech. xiv. 16), by going up to Jerusalem and keeping the feast of Tabernacles there. So Isa. lxvi. 23, *from one new moon, &c., shall all flesh come to worship*, is a figure borrowed from the sacred rites of the church under the Old Testament dispensation, when the Prophet is really speaking of that period of the church when those rites shall be done away.

Again : in the language of prophecy a day is reckoned for a year : thus in that wonderful prophecy fixing the very time of our Lord's appearing (Dan. ix. 24—26), "seventy weeks are determined, &c., to finish transgression," &c., i. e. seventy weeks of years, or seventy times seven years—i. e. 490 years. Again : Dan. iv. 16, "let seven times pass over him," i. e. seven years ; vii. 25 ; xii. 7, "time, times, and half a time"—three and a half prophetic years. Three prophetic years and a half are 1260 prophetic days ; and 1260 prophetic days mean 1260 common years, reckoning a day for a year, referring to the period assigned for the reign and fall of Antichrist.

These illustrations of the figurative language of prophecy may be sufficient to introduce the subject. Those who would inform themselves thoroughly on it, should consult

Lowth on the Hebrew Poetry, Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Bible, &c.

It may be further remarked, that prophecy often speaks of a thing as done before it has taken place, probably to denote the certainty of the event: thus Isaiah lxiv. 10, "*Jerusalem is a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house where our fathers praised Thee is burnt up with fire,*" has reference to Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the city and temple, which did not take place till 100 years after Isaiah wrote this. So also Isa. liii. 3, "*He is despised and rejected of men,*" and (verse 9) "*He hath made his grave with the wicked,*" referring to events in the life of our blessed Lord 700 years before his incarnation.

In the midst of the mention of particular mercies promised to, or of judgments denounced against, the people of God, the Prophets sometimes break forth into sublime predictions concerning the Messiah; see Isa. vii. 14. "These digressions appear exceedingly abrupt and incoherent (remarks Boyle) to those who do not consider how seasonable the mention of Christ may be in connexion with that of the mercies of God (of which He is the foundation and pinnacle, the ground and consummation), and with the threatenings of the judgments of God, in which He was his people's grand consolation."

As to *fulfilled* prophecy; the importance of comparing together the different prophecies which regard the same subject, and these again with the historical account of their fulfilment, may be clearly inferred from pages 22—30; particularly the various prophecies respecting our blessed Lord, page 30, with the four Gospels and the Acts.

On the interpretation of *unfulfilled* prophecy, the following remark of Sir Isaac Newton, on the Revelation of St. John, is very important.

"The folly of interpreters has been, to foretel times and things by the prophecy, as if God designed to make them prophets. He gave this and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosity, by enabling them to foreknow things, but that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event, and his own providence, not the interpreters, be then manifested thereby to the world."

The following passages may in some measure illustrate this. John xiv. 29 : "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye might believe." John ii. 22 : "When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said." So also ii. 17, when they had witnessed His zeal in purifying the Temple, his disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." And it may be remarked, that the great part of the prophecies relating to the Messiah were obscure, that the *event* might be the key to open and illustrate them. And, indeed, the obscurity of the allusion strengthens the evidence of its Divine appointment, as being more free from suspicion. For how could any man attempt to forward its accomplishment, when he could not understand what was intended till the event explained it?

A striking illustration how the obscurity and apparent contradiction of unfulfilled prophecy is removed by the event, is seen in comparing the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel respecting Zedekiah. Jeremiah foretold (chap. xxxiv. 3), that Zedekiah should behold the king of Babylon and go to Babylon; Ezekiel foretold (chap. xii. 13), that Zedekiah should not see Babylon. Zedekiah, as we are informed by Josephus, thinking these prophecies contradictory, believed neither. But both were exactly fulfilled. Zedekiah did see the king of Babylon, not at Babylon, but at Riblah, whence, his eyes being put out, he was carried to Babylon, and died there.

The evil of seeking in our own way to bring about the accomplishment of unfulfilled prophecy is seen in the consequences of the deceit of Rebekah and Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 35, and also in the iniquity of Hazael, 2 Kings viii. The *precepts*, not the *purposes* of God, must ever be the rule of our conduct; as Josiah, though assured (2 Kings xxii. 16) by Huldah of the certainty of the destruction to come upon Jerusalem, did not in the least relax the energy of his efforts to reform it, acting in the spirit of that important distinction "that duty is ours, events are God's."

§ v. *On the Interpretation of Types.*

On no subject is caution more necessary than in the in-

terpretation of a Type. The two following rules are of great importance to be observed by a teacher of the young.

1. Never apply that as a type, for which you have not direct Scriptural authority.

To constitute one thing the type of another (remarks Bishop Marsh), something more is wanted than mere resemblance. The former must not only resemble the latter; but it must have been designed to resemble it in its original constitution; and there is no other rule by which we can distinguish a real from a pretended type, than that of Scripture itself.

2. Content yourself with such an application of a type as the Scripture makes.

In a type, every circumstance is far from being typical; for instance: the High Priest, on the day of atonement, was eminently a type of Christ (see Heb. ix. 7, &c.): but we cannot infer from the High Priest offering first for his own sins, that therefore Christ partook of our sinful nature. The contrary is the fact, that in Him was no sin. (See Beausobre's Introduction to the Holy Scriptures.)

To us the great importance of types is, that we can look back upon a regular connected series of revelations, originating at the creation of the world, and delivered in sundry ways and by divers instruments, and at various times—so that it was impossible to suppose any human concert—and yet uniting to prefigure the advent of that Saviour in whom we trust. We do not require information from the types respecting the nature of the Messiah: this we derive from the New Testament. The point of importance to us is, the intended reference to Christ. If that reference be evident, it is of very inferior moment to know in how many particular circumstances it consists. (Venn.)

§ vi. *On the Interpretation of Parables.*

The Prophets occasionally, as Nathan, Ezekiel, &c. and our Lord, frequently supposed things to have happened; and so framed the story as to convey by it some important truth. Such short instructive stories have been called Parables. In seeking to derive this instruction;

1. Guard against fanciful interpretations. For instance: The parable of the good Samaritan was obviously intended

to illustrate the second great commandment of the Law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But it has been thus sometimes perverted. The good Samaritan has been said to mean our Blessed Lord; the half dead and wounded traveller, Adam and his sinful race; the Priest and Levite, the moral and ceremonial Law; the oil and wine, pardon and sanctification; the two-pence, the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; the inn, the church; the landlord, a pious minister of the Gospel, &c.

Such modes of interpretation (as has been well remarked) are a dangerous departure from the simplicity of the Gospel. They have the effect of producing a disrelish for the pure milk of the word, exciting a morbid longing for what is ingenious rather than what is true. While fancy is amused, and self-conceit gratified, the practical instruction really intended by the Holy Spirit is overlooked; and principles of interpretation sanctioned, which not only tend to make Scripture ridiculous in the eyes of the world, but shake the foundation of all truth; giving the impression that the Scriptures have no definite meaning; making of anything, as Hooker says, what it pleases, and bringing, in the end, all truth to nothing. See *Christian Observer*, 1805, p. 130; and Hooker's *Eccles. Polity*, Book v. c. 59.

2. Never attempt to prove any point of doctrine or duty from single phrases or incidental circumstances.

Doctrines or duties proved in other parts of Scripture may be illustrated by the circumstances of a parable. But from the circumstance of the rich man addressing Abraham (Luke xvi. 24), to infer the propriety of prayers to glorified saints, or that there is any communication of thought between those in heaven and those in hell, is altogether unwarrantable. As well might we attempt to prove that souls have tongues, fingers and eyes, from verses 23, 24.

Throughout the whole of this awful parable, which sets before us in so striking a manner the danger of worldliness and of the *neglect* of duty, the state after death is described by images borrowed from the present life, and from the objects of our senses; because by these means only can such subjects be brought down to our understanding. Abraham's bosom, for instance (ver. 22), is an expression, according to the Jewish mode of thinking and speaking, referring to the custom at their feasts of several guests lying on one couch;

the meaning intended to be conveyed by it being, that Lazarus was received to a place of peculiar honour.

It sometimes happens that a parable contains circumstances which contribute to the general design of a speaker, only so far as the drapery in a picture contributes to the general object of the painter. Or to borrow another illustration : a knife may carve meat, cut bread, and other things, with the edge, though not with the back or the handle ; and yet the back and handle are useful in their places, though the edge alone is immediately employed in cutting things asunder. In a plough, the plough-share cuts the ground, but the other parts of the plough are not useless or unnecessary. A musical instrument is not all strings ; nor a spear all point. So it is with parables. For instance,

In the parable of the wicked husbandman (Matt. xxi. 37), it is said, "They will reverence my Son." No one for one moment imagines that this implies God was ignorant of the actual reception his Son would meet with from the Jews.

We cannot infer from the parable of the talents (Matt. xxv. 14), that they who receive most, will also improve most, because he to whom was committed the one talent was negligent. Luke xviii. 24 ; 1 Cor. i. 26 ; James ii. 5.

We cannot infer from the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. xxv.), that because five are represented as wise and five foolish, half of those who make a profession of religion will be finally saved, and half finally perish.

In the parable of the lost sheep (Luke xv.) only one in one hundred went astray ; in that of the ten pieces of silver, the proportion lost was one in ten ; evidently showing that too much stress is not to be laid on every circumstance of a parable. Otherwise the Bible may soon be made to contradict itself.

The great rule for the interpretation of parables, and, indeed, of all Scripture, is this,

3. Carefully consider the design of the speaker.

Thus, our Lord's design in the parable of the ten virgins is declared by him in Matt. xxv. 13 ; and his design in the parable of the lost sheep, lost piece of money, and prodigal son, may easily be inferred from the occasion which introduced them. See Luke xv. 2.

Chrysostom remarks, "We ought not to lay too much

stress upon single words and phrases ; but when we have learnt the scope and design of the parable, we need not be anxious about any thing but the moral or useful instruction principally intended thereby."

In the parable last referred to (Luke xv.) we need not be anxious to determine who are meant by the hired servants (verse 17), or seek for any far-fetched spiritual interpretation of the ring, &c. As a part of the parable, the putting on the ring, &c., naturally expresses the prodigal's perfect restoration to the privileges of a son, and so far falls in with the general scope of the parable ; but to pursue it further might be to pervert its meaning.

It has been remarked by Archbishop Tillotson, that sometimes a parable and the moral are not like two planes that touch in every point, but like a globe laid upon a plane, which touches it in one point only. For instance, our Lord says (Rev. iii. 3), "Behold, I come as a thief" (see also Luke xii. 39, 40); here the single point is to convey the idea how sudden and unexpected will be his coming.

So in the parable of the unjust steward (Luke xvi.), if we do not attend to the design of our Lord, we may feel a difficulty in the fact that he did not more pointedly condemn the man's injustice ; whereas by observing that the single point here is as to the *means* used for the attainment of the end, the whole difficulty vanishes : for it is evident that, in reference to the means which the unjust steward used, he shewed a forethought well calculated to secure his end ; and that in this single point of comparison as to the use of means calculated to secure the end, each has respectively in view, the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light : that is, they better adapt their means to their end.

4. The sacred writers, and our Lord in his parables, sometimes argue with men on their own principles, rather than on what is true in fact.

Luke xv. 7 : "The Pharisees were not just men who needed no repentance, as never having gone astray ; but they thought themselves so." Again : verse 25, the elder brother refers to the Pharisees ; but it was not true that they had served God and never transgressed his commandment ; that to them, more than to others, belonged the privileges of God's people ; but they thought so : and upon

their own principles, our blessed Lord shews how wrong was their opposition to the publicans and sinners seeking *mercy* at his hands. See also Luke xix. 22.

5. It is not unimportant to consider the circumstances of those to whom the parable was immediately addressed, and how they would have understood it.

Our notion of a Pharisee, for instance, is that of a very bad man, because the hypocrisy of their character has been so fully exposed by our Lord; but the notion a Jew had of the Pharisees was just the contrary; and this must be our clue to the interpretation of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke xviii.); the design of which is to shew that the only ground of justification before God, even for those whom we may consider the best of men, is on the plea of mercy: that trusting in our righteousness, though, like the Pharisee (verse 11), acknowledging it to be the gift of God, we shall go away from his presence unforgiven.

6. Some of our Lord's parables were prophetic.

That of the mustard seed (Matt. xiii. 31, 32) foretold the spread of the Gospel from very small beginnings; that of the husbandman (Matt. xxi. 33) foretold the malice of the Jews, Christ's death, as well as their destruction. Our Lord's parables frequently point to the day of Judgment; and no doubt, remarks Boyle, other prophecies will be further discovered which are yet unregarded.

§ vii. *On the importance of comparing Scripture with Scripture.*

The danger of quoting detached passages of Scripture without a reference to their connexion, or the light which other parts of God's word may throw upon their interpretation, is seen in the fact that the Devil thus quoted scripture in order to lead our Lord to sin (Matt. iv. 6).

1. One important rule therefore in the interpretation of the Bible is to attend to the IMMEDIATE CONTEXT; i. e. what goes before or follows a particular sentence, verse, or chapter. For instance—

John ix. 3: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." Rom. iii. 23, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:" but the context of the former passage

shews the meaning to be, that his blindness was not the punishment of any particular sin ; and that, therefore, neither he nor his parents had sinned in the way the Jews thought they had.

1 Kings xxii. 15 : "Go and prosper, for," &c. ; the context shews that the very reverse of this is meant ; see also 2 Kings x. 3. Again : Numb. xxii. 20. ; "rise and go," &c. clearly appears from the context (verses 12. 32.) does not imply God's approbation, but the contrary, as though God had said to Balaam, if after you know what you ought to do, your heart is still set on acting contrary to it, I give you up to your own heart's lust, as in another instance, Ps. lxxxi. 12.

John xiii. 27 : "What thou doest do quickly," &c. This, so far from being a command to Judas, is rather an awful warning, a declaration to Judas, of Christ's foreknowledge of his wickedness and preparation for it. It was therefore peculiarly calculated to deter Judas from his purpose.

Prov. xi. 31 : "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth," i. e. as appears from the context, punished for their sins.

Prov. xxiv. 16 : "A just man falleth seven times and riseth again." The context shews this does not refer to his falling into sin but into affliction. In disregard of its connection it has been sometimes quoted to support a most dangerous delusion that men might be indulging in sin and yet think themselves to be the children of God.

2 Sam. xvii. 14 : The Lord had determined to defeat the *good* counsel of Abithophel. It was atrociously wicked counsel, but the context shews in what respects it might be termed good, as being the best means to accomplish the end which Absalom had in view. In the same sense the unjust steward is commended by his Lord for having done wisely (Luke xvi).

2 Sam. iv. 11 : Ish-bosheth, though in his opposition to David, acting contrary to the declared will of God (2 Sam. iii. 9), and therefore very unrighteously, is termed by David a *righteous* person, and the context explains it : he was righteous as to his murderers, having done them no injury, given them no provocation.

Ps. vii. 8 : "Judge me according to my righteousness,"

i. e. his innocency in reference to the charge which Cush, the Benjamite brought against him.

1 Kings ii. 32 : "Who fell upon two men more righteous than he,"—referring to Abner and Amasa,—but they were both, though relatively better than Joab, wicked men.

Ezekiel xvi. 52 : "Thy sisters are more righteous than thou," referring to Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. xviii. 20.) But thus the deeper guilt of Judah was enforced.

Rom. iv. 5 : "To him that worketh not," &c. ; i. e. as appears from the context, so as to seek justification by it. In every other point of view works are necessary.

1 Cor. x. 33 : "I please all men in all things." And, Gal. i. 10 : "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." The first (as appears from the immediate context, 31—33) refers to the sacrifice of our comfort, the utter renunciation of self, to promote others' spiritual good ; a duty also enjoined Rom. xv. 1. 1 Cor. xiii. 5. The other (as appears from the general scope, see Gal. vi. 12) refers to flattery of men's corruptions in order to gain their favour.

Numb. xvi. 41 : "But on the morrow all, &c., murmured." Observe the context.

Judges v. 31 ; vi. 1 : No sooner "had Israel rest," than, it is added, "they did evil again." Thus, says Bishop Hall, the security of any people is too often the cause of their corruption. While the Israelites were exercised with war, how scrupulous were they of the least intimation of idolatry ; the mere news of an altar beyond Jordan (Josh. xxii. 15. &c.), drew them together for a revenge. Now, when they are at peace with their enemies, they become at variance with God.

Eccles. i. 2 : "All is vanity," &c. With what force this comes, when we see (from chap. ii.) the means Solomon had of worldly gratification !

Luke xxiv. 47 : "Beginning at Jerusalem" (which had just embued her hands in his blood).

2 Cor. iv. 17 : "Our *light* afflictions," &c. See verses preceding, and chap. xi. 24—28.

Phil. iv. 18 : "I have all and abound, I am full." The connection (chap. i. 16) shews he was then a prisoner, in the immediate prospect of a trial, which might, for aught he knew (chap. ii. 23—17), issue in his martyrdom.

1 John v. 20 : "This is the true God and eternal life." The

context shews that this refers to Jesus Christ, and is an unanswerable proof of his divinity. Three times in this chapter (verses 11—13) eternal life is attributed to Christ as the author and dispenser of it (see also chap. i. 2); and what follows also adds greatly to the force of this interpretation, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols"—Christ is God, worship him, but the worship of any other is idolatry.

The immediate connection of a passage is sometimes interrupted (1) by *digression or parenthesis*.

This is frequent in St. Paul's writings. Thus :

Eph. iii. 1—14 : verses 2—13 are a digression ; the immediate connection of verse 1 is not with verse 2, but with verse 14.

(2) By *the division of chapters*.

Thus, Isa. ix. 8 to x. 4, Bishop Lowth remarks, is a distinct poem, having no connection whatever with what goes before or follows. Also the subject of Isa. liii. properly begins chap. lii. 13, and chap. li. ought to include to verse 12 of chap. lii.

The first three verses of the viii. chapter of Jeremiah ought not to have been separated from those of the preceding chapter. The sixth verse of the iii. chapter begins a distinct prophecy which continues to the end of the vi. chapter.

Bishops Lowth and Horsley consider Psalms xlii. and xliii. to be but one Psalm, and more than 30 MSS. confirm this opinion. Obviously the first verse of the iv. chapter to the Colossians ought to be joined to the iii. chapter.

The division of the Bible into chapters was probably not made till the middle of the 13th century, and into verses much later, A.D. 1661.

2. The Scriptures are so wonderfully interwoven together as parts of one system of truth, that frequently PORTIONS OF OTHER BOOKS of Scripture may be said to form part of the connection of a passage. Thus :

Ps. cvi. 19 : "They made a calf in Horeb;" i. e. as appears from Exod. xxxii., on the very spot where, and at the time when, God was taking them into covenant. "They worshipped the molten image," and that so soon after they had seen the terrible plagues inflicted on the Egyptians for their idolatry (Numb. xxxiii. 4).

1 Kings xxii. 48 : " But the ships were broken," &c. In 2 Chron. xx. 35—37, the reason is stated.

Acts xv. 39 : " Why should Barnabas so warmly espouse the cause of Mark ?" Col. iv. 10. tells us he was his nephew.

Gal. vi. 15, with v. 6, and 1 Cor. vii. 19, explains what is meant by, " If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." And John iii. 5, &c. explains the origin of this change.

The history of Balaam affords a remarkable illustration of the *importance of comparing Scripture with Scripture*. In order to obtain a complete view of his character, we must turn not only to the narrative in the book of Numbers (xxii—xxiv and xxxi.) but also to the prophet Micah (Micah vi. 6) from whom we learn the extent of his religious knowledge, the just views Balaam had of the spiritual nature of true religion : and again to (2 Pet. ii. 15.) where we are informed what motive influenced him ; and again to Jude, to see the deep hold which covetousness had upon him (verse 11) : while the book of Revelation alone records a very remarkable fact concerning him (Rev. ii. 14.), that it was at his instigation Balak threw that temptation in the way of the Israelites which caused the destruction of 23,000 of them in one day.

The disregard of this rule of comparing Scripture with Scripture led the Jews to the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, and even to justify that rejection in their view by an appeal to Scripture.

John xii. 34 : " We have heard out of our law that Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest thou the Son of man must be lifted up ?" i. e. die. That Christ was to abide for ever, they gathered from those passages of Scripture where his kingdom is represented to be everlasting : as Dan. vii. 14. ; Ezek. xxxvii. 25. ; Isa. ix. 7. ; and from God's promise to David, Psalm lxxxix. 36, 37. But had they also sufficiently attended, as Whitby remarks, to other passages, in which our blessed Lord is represented as a suffering Messiah (Ps. xxii. 18. xl. 6. ; Isa. liii. 2, 12. ; Dan. ix. 26.), they would have had their scruples removed, and would have readily believed what he so frequently foretold concerning himself.

§ viii. *Words used in different senses.*

WORDS are not always used exactly in the same sense. For instance—

Blood.

Acts xvii. 26: "Made of one blood," &c., i. e. hath created the race of man all from Adam, their first parent.

Matt. xxvii. 25: "His blood be on us," &c.; i. e. the punishment due to the putting him to death.

Eph. i. 7: "Redemption through his blood;" i. e. by the sacrifice of his death upon the cross where his blood was shed; explaining the typical intention, under the Old Testament, of the blood rather than any other part of the victim being consecrated. Lev. xvii. 11: "For it is the blood that maketh atonement."

Covenant.

The term "Covenant" is frequently used in the Bible. We read of God entering into covenant with man; but this is in a sense differing somewhat from the covenants which men usually make with each other.

In covenants which men make with each other, as for instance Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. xxi. 27), the contracting parties, remarks Beausobre, are at liberty, and have nearly the same right of proposing the conditions on which they are willing to agree and covenant together. But the case is otherwise in those which God has made with man. God is the Creator, and men his creatures; He is the Supreme Monarch, and they his subjects; He is the Sovereign Lawgiver, and must be obeyed, absolutely and without reserve. When God, therefore, says that He makes a *covenant* with mankind, His meaning is, that out of condescension and mere goodness He is pleased, as it were, to descend from his Supreme Majesty, and not use his power, that He may engage them to obedience by a principle of gratitude and love.

Hence God's great covenant with fallen man, through the Lord Jesus Christ, is described (Luke i. 72) as his mercy promised to our forefathers, Abraham, &c. Mercy put in the form of a covenant, to assure us of its certainty, and to remind us of the solemnity of our obligation to holiness as partakers of such infinite mercy.

The New and Old Covenant alluded to (Jerem. xxxi. 31,

Gal. iv. 24, and in many other parts of the Bible) refer to the Jewish and Christian dispensations.

Faith.

1 Cor. xiii. 2: "All faith;" i. e. such a reliance on some particular promise to that effect; evidently of a very different kind to that mentioned in Rom. v. 1.

Rom. iii. 3: "Faith of God;" i. e. faithful promises of God.

Acts xxiv. 24: "The faith in Christ;" i. e. referring to the doctrines of the Gospel generally, of which a reliance on Christ alone for salvation is the distinguishing feature.

Rom. xiv. 23. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Here faith signifies not the belief of the Gospel, but the persuasion that what we do is lawful.

Flesh.

Rom. vii. 5, viii. 8: "They that are in the flesh cannot please God;" i. e. those who are under the guidance of their corrupt nature; yet,

Ezekiel xxxvi. 26: "A heart of flesh" means a tender, teachable temper.

Gal. iii. 3: "Are ye now made perfect by the flesh;" i. e. the outward ceremonies of the Mosaic law, particularly circumcision.

Job. xix. 26: "In my flesh," &c.: i. e. my flesh or body being raised from the grave.

Gen. vi. 12: "All flesh had corrupted his way;" i. e. all men. So also Ps. lxxv. 2: "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come;" i. e. all mankind.

Grace.

Grace means favour; but in the particular application of it, it is made to refer to different subjects.

Rom. iii. 24: "Being justified freely by his grace," refers to God's mercy in the pardon of sin, bestowed without any merit in us.

Titus ii. 11: "The grace of God, &c., teacheth," &c.; refers to the Gospel.

2 Peter iii. 18: "Grow in grace," &c.; i. e. holiness, and so called because it is the effect of God's grace, we being his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Law.

Rom. iii. 20 : Refers to law in general, comprehending the law written on man's heart (Rom. ii. 15) as well as the law of Moses, or the revealed law.

John x. 34 : Refers to the Jewish Scriptures generally, it being a reference to Ps. lxxxii. 6.

Heb. x. 1 : Refers to the covenant made with the Jews, particularly their ceremonial law.

Rom. vii. 7 : Refers to the Ten Commandments.

Isa. ii. 3 : "Out of Zion a law;" i. e. the doctrine of the Gospel; because it has the nature and power of a law, obliging us no less to the belief and practice of it than the old law did.

James i. 25 : "Perfect law of liberty;" i. e. the Gospel.

All, every, &c.

1 Cor. x. 23 : "All things are lawful," &c.; i. e. *many* things, otherwise permitted, become by circumstances inexpedient.

Phil. iv. 13 : "I can do all things;" i. e. within the limits of Christian duty.

Luke xvi. 16, &c. : "Kingdom of Heaven, &c., every man presseth into it;" i. e. without distinction of Jew or Gentile.

Luke ii. 1 : "All the world," i. e. the Roman Empire.

Acts xi. 28 : "All the world," meaning Judea; the famine was not at Antioch, and Josephus mentions that large quantities of corn were sent up to Jerusalem from other countries.

1 John ii. 20 : "Ye know all things," &c.; and again, (ver. 27), "Ye need not that any man teach you," &c. Not that they had absolutely no need of human teaching, or that the Holy Spirit would guide them by any other rule than that of his written word; but that word dwelling in them richly, they had not so much need to be taught as those that knew not the first principles of the oracles of God. If not taken in this restricted sense, it would reduce us to the absurdity of supposing it impossible that a man, in any degree of error, could be a true Christian (since all true Christians are anointed or taught by the Holy Ghost); and that the productions of a man's distempered brain, dignified with the name of revelations of the Spirit, were superior even to the Scriptures. See Doddridge, &c.

Prov. xxii. 6 : "Train up, &c., not depart," &c. : i. e. for the most part. Pious principles instilled in youth *seldom* fail of operating in old age. Moses, Samuel, Timothy, &c., are instances of it. Yet wicked Ahaz was the son of a godly father, and the father of a godly son. Pious Hezekiah was the son of a wicked father, and the father of a wicked son. Jeroboam had a pious son Abijah, and Samuel a Joel and Abiah, who turned out unjust judges, though we have no intimation, as in the case of Eli, that he had been too indulgent to them.

Other instances may be given of words not always being used in the same sense. Thus :

2 Kings xvii. 33 : "The Samaritans feared the Lord and served their own gods ;" in a very different sense then from (Pro. viii. 13) "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil."

Matt. xxvi. 27 : "He took the cup ;" but in verse 39 "cup" means affliction.

Heb. ix. 27 : "It is appointed to man once to die ;" i. e. temporally.

John viii. 51 : "If any man keep my sayings, he shall never see death ;" i. e. the second or eternal death.

These illustrations are sufficient to suggest caution in the interpretation of Scripture.

That words are not always used in the same sense in Scripture arises from their being written, not as philosophers, but as men in general talk and write. That the Scriptures should be so written displays both the wisdom and the condescension of God. While the seeming negligence of the style, taken in connection with the sublimity of the matter, stamps its Divine origin, this popular style is really better suited to instruct mankind in the great truths of salvation. The chief guides to such knowledge are a spirit of prayer, a love of truth, good common sense, and a diligent comparison of Scripture with Scripture.

§ ix. *Importance of attending to Proper Names.*

The same persons or places sometimes have several names.

Joshua is called (Acts vii. 45 ; Heb. iv. 8) Jesus. Nahash (2 Sam. xvii. 25) is the same as Jesse (1 Chron. ii. 13, &c.), the father of David ; and hence, learning that Joab and Amasa were near relatives to David, and to each other, many circumstances in their history are illustrated by this fact.

Our blessed Lord is spoken of, in Ezekiel xxxiv. 23, xxxvii. 24. Hosea iii. 5, under the name of David. And again, under the name of Zerubbabel, Hag. ii. 23. John the Baptist, in Mal. iv. 5, as Elijah.

Mark ii. 14 : " And as he passed by, he saw Levi," &c. ; this is the same as Matthew. So Matthew is called the publican ; and Simon, the leper (Matt. xxvi. 6), after they had ceased to be so.

Horeb and Sinai are often used indiscriminately as the same, being different peaks of one and the same range of mountains (Deut. v. 2 ; Exod. xix. 18—23).

The Sea of Tiberias is the same as the Lake of Gennesaret, or, as it was more anciently called, Cinnereth (Numb. xxxiv. 11 ; Josh. xii. 3) ; Edom, and Idumea are the same.

2. Many persons and places also have the same name.

Ephraim, in Gen. xlviii. 5, refers to a person ; in Judges i. 29, to a tribe ; in Jer. xxxi. 18, " surely I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself," &c., to the Ten Tribes of Israel ; in John xi. 54, to a city.

Among the Kings of Judah and Israel there were several of the same name (see table at the end of 2 Chron. viii).

There were several Zachariahs—(1) Zachariah, the fourth in descent from Jehu, who reigned just long enough to fulfil God's promise to Jehu (2 Kings xv. 8. x. 30.)—(2) Zachariah, a prophet, basely murdered by Joash, who had been redeemed from destruction by his father (2 Chron. xxiv. 21.)—(3) Zachariah the prophet, whose writings form part of the Bible, and who was raised up to encourage the Jews to rebuild the temple (Ezra v. i).

There were several Herods ; (1) Herod the Great, who attempted the murder of our Blessed Lord in his infancy (Matt. ii.), (2) Herod Antipas, his son—inquisitive about the truth without loving it, (Mark vi. 20. Luke xxiii. 8.) crafty, (Luke xiii. 32) incestuous, (Matt. xiv. 3) superstitious, (Mark vi. 16) the murderer of John the Baptist, (Matt. xiv. 10) and the mocker of our Blessed Lord in his last sufferings, (Luke xxiii. 11.) (3) Herod Agrippa, nephew of Herod Antipas, and grandson of Herod the Great, the murderer of the Apostle James, and eaten of worms for his pride (Acts xii).

So there are some names which appear to have been common to several successive kings of a country, as Pharaoh

to the kings of Egypt; Abimelech (Gen. xx. 2. xxvi.) to the kings of the Philistines. Jabin was a common name of the kings of Canaan, as evidently the Jabin mentioned in Josh. xi. 1, xii. 19, was not the Jabin mentioned Judges iv. 2; Agag, of the Amalekites (Numb. xxiv. 7; 1 Sam. xv. 8); Artaxerxes, of the Persians; Cæsar, of the Romans.

The Antioch of Acts xiii. 1, and the Antioch of 2 Tim. iii. 11, mean different places; the one was in Syria, the other in Pisidia.

There were two Bethlehems (see Joshua xix. 15); several Cæsareas (Matt. xvi. 13; Acts ix. 30; xviii. 22); several Mizpehs—one in Judah, where Samuel dwelt (1 Sam. vii. 5, 6); Mizpeh in Gilead, where Jephthah dwelt (Judges xi.); also Mizpeh of Moab (1 Sam. xxii. 3), where David's conduct was a bright example of filial piety.

3. Scripture names have often a very significant meaning. Thus:

Achan means "*he that troubleth*," thus his name becomes an epitome of his history (Josh. vii.) Adam, *earthy*, or *red earth* (Gen. ii. 7) so far in the works of God does the workmanship exceed the materials. Abraham, *father of a great multitude*, (Gen. xvii. 5) a prophecy wonderfully fulfilled with regard to both his natural and spiritual seed (Gal. iii. 29; Rev. vii. 9). Alleluia, *praise the Lord* (Rev. xix. 1). Beer, *a well* (Numb. xxi. 16; see also Gen. xvi. 14). Beerlahacroi, Hagar's memorial of God's compassion to her. Edom, *red* (Gen. xxv. 30) a brand put on Esau's profaneness in selling his birthright for a mess of red pottage. Ebenezer, *the stone of help* (1 Sam. vii. 12). Jah, *self-existent, everlasting*. Judah, *praise the Lord*, directing us to him as the ancestor of the promised Messiah. Jubilee, *sounding of the trumpet*. Melchizedek, *king of righteousness*, (Gen. xiv. 18. with Heb. vii. 2) remarkably showing how much Christ is kept in view in the historical parts of the Old Testament. Messiah (the same as Christ) *anointed* (1 Sam. ii. 10; Dan. ix. 25). Moses, *taken out of the water* (Exod. ii. 10). Noah, *rest*. Salem, *peace*. Solomon, *peaceable*. Samuel, *asked of the Lord* (1 Sam. i. 20) peculiarly descriptive of the fact, and it is very observable that he whose name was intended as a memorial of God's goodness in answering prayer was in his life distinguished as a man of prayer (Ps. xcix. 6.) Teraphim, *images*, referring to idolatrous worship, and

thus throwing light on Hosea iii. 4, that remarkable prophecy respecting the present state of the Jews, bitter enemies of truth, as seen in their continued rejection of Christianity, and yet restrained from idolatry to which they were formerly so prone. Tophet, *a drum*, the name of a place near Jerusalem, where children were burnt as offerings to Molech, and drums beat to drown their cries. Urim and Thummim, *light and perfection* (Exod. xxviii. 30) indicating the clearness with which God would impart to the High Priest the knowledge of His will when that knowledge was sought by means which He had appointed. Those names which begin or end with EL, or begin with JE, or end with IAH, were generally designed to express some relation to God, as Bethel, *the house of God*. Israel, *a prince with God*, a name given to Jacob as an encouragement to us to perseverance in prayer (Gen. xxxii. 28) as the name Israelites given to His people was to remind them of what should be their distinguishing character.

§ x. *Value of some knowledge of Geography.*

Geography principally refers to the relative situation of places.

1. The first thing we may notice, is the peculiarity of some geographical terms, as used in the Scriptures.

The Hebrews (as Mr. Mede observes) use the word "Isles," to signify all those countries divided from them by sea (Isa. xi. 10, 11; xl. 15; Jer. ii. 10): or the word may be used generally, for a region, country, or province (Job xxii. 30; Isa. xx. 6).

The term *coasts* does not always apply to land bordering on the sea—thus Matt. ii. 16. "in all the coasts" means all the parts; and Matt. xv. 21. "coasts" refers to the inland countries belonging to the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

Lesser Asia and Europe, peopled by the descendants of Japheth, are called the Isles of the Gentiles, Gen. x. 5.

Acts xvi. 7. Paul was forbidden to preach in Asia, yet he immediately essayed to go into Bithynia. Without a knowledge of the peculiarity of some of the Geographical terms of Scripture we might be ready to charge him with an act of disobedience, for Bithynia was not only in what we call Asia, but in Asia Minor.

"Asia," throughout the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul, so far from being what we understand by the term, does not (as Paley remarks) mean the whole of Asia Minor, or Anatolia, nor even the whole of Proconsular Asia, but a district in the interior part of the country, called Lydian Asia, divided from the rest much as Portugal is from Spain; and of which district Ephesus was the capital (Acts ii. 9; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Rev. i. 4).

Ever since the Grecian monarchy prevailed over so great a part of the world, the Jews called all the civilized part of mankind, except themselves, *Greeks*. See Acts xix. 10. xx. 21.; Rom. i. 16.; ii. 9. 10.; x. 12.; and this explains why she who is called by Matthew (chap. xv. 22.) a woman of Canaan, i. e. one of the old stocks of the Canaanites, is called by Mark (chap. vii. 26.) a Greek, though, as Mark himself says, she was a native of Syro-Phoenicia.

The term *Grecians*, however, as used in the New Testament, refers not to Gentiles, but to Jews, to those Jews who, born and living in other countries, though occasionally coming up to Jerusalem, as their law required, used the Greek language and the Greek translation of the Scriptures; see Acts vi. 1. ix. 29. xi. 20.

When places are mentioned as lying North, South, East, or West, it is generally to be understood of their situation with respect to Judea and Jerusalem.

2. Without a knowledge of ancient Geography many fulfilled prophecies must be unintelligible. Thus:

Numb. xxiv. 24: Balaam's wonderful prophecy of the conquests of Alexander and his successors, and of the Romans, over the Assyrians and Jews, and of the destruction of the Macedonian and Roman Empires, would be unintelligible to those who knew not that Chittim, or Kittim, (referring to the descendants of Javan, Gen. x. 4.) settled in Macedonia and Italy; that Ashur refers to the Assyrian, and Eber to the Jews.

3. A knowledge of Geography often removes apparent contradictions.

Luke xxiv. 50 (referring to our Lord's ascension), says, "Jesus led his disciples out as far as Bethany," &c.; but Acts i. 12, we read the disciples returned from Mount Olivet. But Olivet was situated between Bethphage and Bethany, and our Lord ascended from that part of the moun-

tain which lay next Bethany ; and thus the two accounts are harmonized.

4. Sometimes a knowledge of Geography sheds a lustre on character, and suggests some important moral lesson. Thus :

Acts viii. 27 : " Behold a man of Ethiopia," &c. ; that is, African Ethiopia, lying below Egypt. Geography thus teaches us, that this great officer of state had come some thousands of miles to worship at the Temple. Ought trifling excuses, then, to keep us from the house of God ?

Acts xix. 21 : Here, again, is a vast circuit. So, again, in chap. xiii. and xiv. we find Paul labouring in Seleucia, Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia ; and, chap. xv. xvi., called over to Macedonia, and so into Europe. We find him busy at Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia. A knowledge of the extent and distance of these countries, traversed thus by one who knew that at every step bonds and afflictions awaited him, enables us better to appreciate the ardour of that love of Christ which thus constrained him. What an example to us of self-denial and Christian devotedness !

If we trace on a Map the countries through which Abraham passed, and consider at the same time the probable amount of population at that period, we shall find that Abraham, in complying with the Divine command, preached the true religion to the great mass of mankind. And how impressive must have been the spectacle he presented to the world, a rich and powerful prince, attended by a large retinue of servants and retainers, traversing the earth, not for the purposes of war and conquest, as so many various tribes were then doing, but to preach the recovery of men from the effects of the fall. (*Hales's Analysis.*)

5. It may often be desirable, when referring to a particular place, to inquire what other remarkable events happened there. This will sometimes throw light even on the immediate subject.

For instance, Gen. xli. 1. Jacob came to Beersheba and offered sacrifice. The peculiar propriety of his making this the spot for his first act of public worship on leaving Canaan for Egypt, may be noticed from what had taken place there. It was at Beersheba that his grandfather Abraham, called on the name of the everlasting God. Gen. xxi. 33.

While Abraham sojourned at Beersheba, it pleased God to make that signal trial of Abraham's obedience by requiring him to go into the land of Moriah and there offer his only son Isaac, whom he loved, for a burnt offering. To Beersheba Abraham returned with Isaac, enriched with the Divine blessing. (Gen. xxii.) At Beersheba Jacob's father, Isaac, had the promise renewed to him, and built an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord. These associations were calculated to give a deep solemnity to Jacob's mind, and to render Beersheba a spot very suitable for his thus seeking, at this critical period of his life, the blessing of God upon himself and his children. Again: Judges ii. 1, "And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim," &c. At Gilgal the Israelites, first rested in Canaan: there they renewed their covenant with God. At Gilgal were the twelve stones, memorials of the power and grace of God in drying up the waters of Jordan (Josh. iv. 20); from thence God had so often gone out with them to battle, and given them success. That the angel came, therefore, from Gilgal, would add greatly to the force of his reproof, by reminding them of their ingratitude.

1 Kings xvii. 9. By observing that Zarephath was in Zidon, and that Jezebel was a Zidonian (xvi. 31), it is seen that Elijah found shelter from his bitterest enemy in her own country; thus signally does God's providence protect his people.

Many interesting associations are connected with the Mount of Olives! There, how often had the Saviour spent the night in prayer! (Luke xxi. 37; John viii. 1; xviii. 2); there he wept over Jerusalem (Luke xix. 41): there he foretold its destruction (Matt. xxiv): there was his agony (Luke xxii. 44): there his triumph, when ascending up on high, he led captivity captive (Acts i. 12; Ephes. iv. 8) opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

6. But under the term Geography may be included a notice of the climate, weather, &c. A knowledge of these also will throw light on Scripture.

Isa. xxix. 17: "Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field;" or, as Lowth renders it, "ere Lebanon become like Carmel?" It heightens the force of this figure, expressive of the blessings God would pour on his church, when we know that the

summit of Lebanon (a chain of limestone mountains) was the region of perpetual snow, storm, and tempest; where the fig-tree, and the corn, the vine, and olive, could never grow; and that Mount Carmel, on the contrary, was noted for its great fertility.

In that very beautiful chapter (xxxv.) of Isaiah, describing the blessings of the Gospel, we read not only of the excellency of Carmel, but the glory of Lebanon. This consisted principally in its magnificent cedars; a further reference to which we have in Hosea xiv. 5: "He shall grow as, &c., and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."

A knowledge of the intense heat of the climate, adds to the force of such passages as Isaiah xxxii. 2, where, referring to our Blessed Saviour, it is said, "He shall be a covert from the heat," &c.; heat which (see 2 Kings iv. 18, &c.) often strikes with instant death.

The dew of that country rendered the ground peculiarly soft and fruitful. With the knowledge of this, refer to Deut. xxxii. 2, and Hosea xiv. 5. The dew fell suddenly and heavily, not a blade of grass escaping it: hence the force of Hushai's remark, 2 Sam. xvii. 12, "We will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground."

1 Sam. xii. 16, 17: "Now, therefore, stand and see this *great* thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain." Rain and a thunder-storm in summer would be nothing extraordinary in our country; but in Judea it is very uncommon. Autumn and Spring are the periods of rain. Hence the meaning of the terms "early and latter rain," so often mentioned in the Old Testament; the early falling in October, before seed-time, to prepare the ground for being broken up: the latter rain in the spring, before harvest, to fill the ears of corn.

But though a knowledge of Geography be so important, even an outline of the geography of the various countries referred to in the Bible would far exceed the limits of this work; as the Bible conducts us to the origin of all nations, and touches frequently on their subsequent history, through a period of more than 2000 years.

The plain of Shinar (Genesis xi.), from which mankind spread themselves over the world, was between the Tigris and Euphrates; and the Empires which first arose were the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian.

Geography of the Holy Land.

But as our chief attention must be directed to that country in which God was manifest in the flesh for the redemption of the world, some slight notice must be taken of its names, boundary, and divisions.

Its Names.

It was called the *Land of Canaan*, from Canaan. He was the youngest son of Ham, and grandson of Noah, and settled there after the confusion of Babel (Gen. xi.).

1. The *Land of Promise* (Heb. xi. 9), from the promise made by God to Abraham, that his posterity should possess it (Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 15); who, being termed Hebrews, this region was thence called the Land of the Hebrews (Gen. xl. 15).

2. The *Land of Israel*, from the Israelites, or posterity of Jacob, who was honoured by God with the name of Israel for his earnestness in prayer; and this being the branch of Abraham's descendants who settled in this land.

3. *Palestine* (Exod. xv. 14), probably from Palisthan, signifying "Shepherd Land" in the Sanscrit language.

4. *Judea*, as the land of the Jews—from Judah, the most considerable of the twelve Tribes, being that from which the Messiah came.

Its Boundaries and Size, &c.

It lay between lat. 31° and 34° . It was bounded on the North by Cœlo-Syria: to the East by Arabia Deserta; to the West by the Mediterranean, or Great Sea; to the South and South-West by Arabia, Petræa, and Egypt. Its extent was about two hundred miles, from North to South (i. e. from Dan to Beersheba); and its breadth about ninety miles.

"Thus it appears that the whole land of Israel is in length about equal to the distance from London to York; and, in its middle and widest parts, less on an average than half its length. We must remember, however, that it differed entirely from that part of our own country in many other respects; and particularly in being much more mountainous, of a better soil, productive of more and better fruits, and under the influence of a climate with which ours cannot be compared." (See Key to Scripture Map of the Holy

Land, No. 416, on the List of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.)

Its Divisions.

The Holy Land admits of a *natural* division into two unequal parts (of which the Western was considerably the greater), by the river Jordan, which rises in the mountains of Hermon (a branch of the mountains of Libanus), and, running south, through the Lake of Gennesaret, or Sea of Tiberias or Galilee, after a course of one hundred and fifty miles, loses itself in the Dead Sea, called also the Sea of the Plain, and occupying the place where Sodom and Gomorrah formerly stood.

Its *historical* divisions are numerous.

When Canaan settled in it, he divided it among his eleven children; each of whom became the head of a distinct nation (Gen. x. 15, &c.).

In the time of Abraham (about seven hundred years after Canaan settled in it) it was occupied by ten nations (Gen. xv. 18—21).

When Joshua entered it, it was occupied by seven nations (Deut. vii. 1; Joshua iii. 10; xxiv. 11).

On the conquest of it by Joshua, by the command of God he divided it among the twelve Tribes of Israel by lot, yet so that the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, had their portions as distinct tribes, and the tribe of Levi possessed no land; but forty-eight cities, scattered over all the tribes, were allotted to them.

In the arrangement of the tribes, Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, were on the East side of Jordan, and the remaining nine and a half on the West side of it; to the *North*, Asher, Napthali, Zebulun, Issachar; the *middle*, Ephraim, and the remaining half tribe of Manasseh; the *South*, Dan, Simeon, Benjamin, and Judah.

By Jeroboam's revolt, B. C. 975, the Holy Land was divided into two separate kingdoms, Judah and Israel; Judah including the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, the capital of which was Jerusalem; Israel including the remaining ten tribes, its capital Samaria, about thirty miles north-east of Jerusalem.

This division ceased when the kingdom of Israel was overturned by Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria, B. C. 721.

The Holy Land, which had become, about 63 years before the Birth of Christ, a Roman province, through the conquest of Pompey, was, in the time of our Lord, divided on the *Western* side of Jordan, into Galilee, to the North ; Samaria, in the middle ; Judea Proper, to the South : and the country on the *Eastern* side of Jordan was called *Peræa*.

For any particular notice of the cities, towns, or villages, of the Holy Land, see Wigram's *Geography of the Holy Land*.

§ xi. *On the value of some knowledge of Natural History.*

Many allusions are made in Scripture, to understand which a knowledge of *Natural History* is necessary.

Gen. xlix. 14. Jacob compares Issachar to an ass. Now we attach to this the idea of slowness, stupidity, degradation ; but in the East, the idea of bodily strength and vigour is suggested by this resemblance ; so that though *we* should say, a bridle for the horse and a whip for the ass, in Prov. xxvi. 3. it is said, a whip for the horse, and a bridle for the ass, the ass of eastern countries going more freely than the horse. This also enables us better to understand the sublime description given in Job, of the wild ass, chap. xxxix. 5, where Jehovah himself is introduced as addressing Job in a speech abounding with references to natural history.

Hab. iii. 19 : "He will make my feet like hinds' feet," &c. The hart, or hind, is remarkably swift-footed, and able to walk with ease and safety on the dangerous cliffs of the steep rocks. See, also, Ps. xviii. 33 ; Isa. xxxv. 6, &c.

Important religious instruction is also derived in Scripture from the instincts and habits of the Ant (Prov. vi. 6 ; xxx. 25) ; the Ostrich (Job xxxix.) ; the annual migration of the stork, the turtle, the crane, the swallow. Jer. viii. 7 : "Yea, the stork, &c., but my people, &c., not," &c. : so, again, Isa. liii. 6, 7 : "All we, like sheep, have, &c. ; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," &c.

Eagles fly round their nest, and vary their flight, for the instruction of their young ; and afterwards, taking them on their backs, they soar with them aloft, in order to try their strength, shaking them off into the air ; and if they perceive them to be too weak to sustain themselves, they

will with surprising dexterity, fly under them again, and receive them on their wings, to prevent their fall. The Eagle is supposed to be the only sort of bird endued with this kind of instinct. This serves to explain one of the boldest and most beautiful similes in the Sacred Writings (Deut. xxxii. 11, 12), Moses' description of God's powerful and tender care of the Israelites through the Wilderness. (Bishop Newton.) See, also, Exod. xix. 4, referring to the lofty flight and peculiar affection of the eagle for its young. Also, Isa. xl. 31, "They shall mount up with wings as eagles," &c.

1 Kings xvii. 6. A knowledge of the voracious habits of the ravens, strengthens the force of the miracle, their natural appetites having been so restrained that they brought meat to Elijah. Who can make question, says Bishop Hall, of the means which God possesses of providing for his creatures, when he sees the very ravens forget their own hunger, and bring food to Elijah? Let not our faith be wanting to God, his care shall never be wanting to us.

Ps. xcii. 12: "The righteous shall flourish like the Palm tree." The noble and beautiful palm tree (remarks Dr. Clarke) affords an agreeable shade; its fruit makes a great part of the diet of the East: the stones are ground for camels; the leaves are made into couches, baskets, &c.; the boughs into fences; the fibres of the boughs into ropes and the rigging of small vessels; the sap into arrack; and the wood serves for lighter buildings, and fire-wood. From the same root it produces a great number of suckers, which form, upwards, a kind of forest, by their spreading, (see Judges iv. 5; Deborah). It is, moreover, an ever-green.

The figurative use which the Scriptures thus make of the works of nature, should lead us to view them in the same association. What Paley says of that train of thinking which regards the phenomena of nature with a constant reference to a supreme intelligent Author, applies with more force to that train of thinking by which, from the works of nature, we are reminded of some great revealed truth. "To have made this the ruling, the habitual sentiment of our minds, is to have laid the foundation of every thing religious in our mind. The world, thenceforth, becomes a temple, and life itself one continued act of adoration."

§ xii. *Value of Chronology.*

The science of computing and adjusting periods of time, is called Chronology. Without chronology there could be no history. The consideration of when such an event happened, as compared with some other event, may be easily shewn to be of great importance in the interpretation of Scripture. For instance :

It is an awful aggravation of the guilt of the inhabitants of Sodom, and Gomorrah, not only that they were the descendants of Noah, but that, when they had become so wicked as is described (Gen. xviii. 20), Noah had not been dead one hundred years. Chronology teaches us this.

1 Sam. iv. 8. When from Chronology we learn that this remark of the Philistines was made more than 300 years after those plagues had been inflicted, it shews the deep impression which the miraculous facts of the Jewish history made on the nations around, and through them, on the Gentile world, in the very centre of which God had placed his people: illustrating what was said by God, Exod. ix. 16. "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared *throughout all the earth.*"

So the date of Paul's First Epistle to Timothy, A. D. 64, i. e. nearly thirty years after his conversion, compared with chap. i. 15. "and of whom I am chief," shews how a good man cherishes to the end of life a deep sense of his sinfulness.

2 Kings xxiii. 13. The high places which Solomon built for Ashtaroath, &c. appear to have remained more than 350 years. Solomon probably died a penitent, but Chronology assists us to shew in his instance, "that they who introduce corruptions into religion, know not how far they will reach, nor how long they will last."

A consideration of the *chronological order* of the prophetic writings will often suggest important instruction. Thus :

Ezek. xl.—xlviii., perhaps with the single exception of the Book of the Revelation, is the most obscure and difficult portion of Scripture: yet, viewed chronologically, i. e. in reference to the time when it was delivered, it gives a striking illustration how well adapted prophecy was to the moral exigencies of the church. The subject of these

chapters is a prophetic vision, expressed under the figure of a new city and temple. And when was this declared? In the most gloomy season of the captivity, twelve years before Jehoiakin was released from prison by Evil-Merodach.

Evidently, therefore, though it was to have its full accomplishment in the times of the Gospel, by the aid of chronology we perceive, that Ezekiel's vision had for its immediate object, the consolation of his brethren, who were then commemorating, by the waters of Babylon, with sighs and tears, the fate of their former city and temple, now for fourteen years lying in utter desolation. The same remark as applying to Daniel's prophecy, has been already hinted at, p. 27.

There are some real difficulties in the adjustment of the dates of the Old Testament; in reference to which, works such as Hales's Chronology, &c. must be consulted; but some are easily explained: for instance, 2 Kings xv. 33, it is said Jotham reigned sixteen years; yet ver. 30 mentions his twentieth year. This chronological difficulty is thus removed: Jotham reigned sixteen years alone; but with his father, Uzziah, four years before.

Sons thus frequently reigned with their father (1 Kings i. Solomon with David, &c.); and the application of this rule will reconcile many seeming differences in the Books of Kings and Chronicles.

1 Pet. ii. 17: "Honour the King." It adds to the force of this command, to learn from chronology that the tyrant Nero was then the Emperor of the world. The same remark applies to 1 Tim. ii., "prayers, &c. for kings." When Christians were everywhere persecuted, they were commanded to pray publicly, and first for civil governors. See also Rom. xiii., enforcing subjection under the same circumstances.

An *Epoch* is a fixed point, or a certain remarkable date, made use of in Chronology from which to begin or compute years.

Thus the Jews were used to reckon from the Flood, from their coming out of Egypt, from the building of the Temple, &c.; the Greeks reckoned by Olympiads¹; the Romans,

¹ The first Olympiad was B.C. 776, and 23 years before the building

from the foundation of Rome; and Christians, from the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As an assistance to remembering the order of time in which the several transactions recorded in the Old Testament happened, the following dates are given :

	YEARS.
From the Creation to the Flood	1656
From the Flood to the call of Abraham . .	427
From the call of Abraham to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and the promul- gation of the Law from Sinai	430
From thence to the foundation of Solomon's Temple	479
From thence to the restoration of the Jews by Cyrus	476
From the restoration of the Jews to the birth of our Lord	536
Making a total, from the Creation to the birth of our Lord, of	4004

The three periods of Jewish history to which Matthew especially draws attention, are: From Abraham to David, 858 years; from David to Babylonian captivity, 475 years; from Babylonian captivity to the birth of our Lord, 588 years.

Genealogies, or lists of ancestors, some may think to be among the least profitable parts of Scripture, seeming little less than a succession of hard names;

But in them is illustrated the most striking fulfilment of prophecy, in enabling us to trace the Messiah's descent. (See p. 30.) In the first part of the Chronicles we have genealogies carried on for more than 3500 years (1 Chron. i. iii. iv).

St. Matthew gives us one of about 2000 years, from Abraham to Christ; and Luke, one of 4000 years, from Adam to Christ. The genealogies of Matthew and Luke differ; but though requiring learning to reconcile, they teach this to the unlearned, that Matthew and Luke were independent writers; for had there been collusion, there would have been, at least on such a subject, obvious agreement.

of Rome, in the reign of Uzziah king of Judah, and about 55 years before the Ten tribes were taken captive by Shalmanezar.

Thus remarks Pascal : " Even the apparently weak points in the chain of evidence have their peculiar force to a well-constituted mind." Again : That the Jews should (as we observe from these genealogies) have traced their Messiah through Tamar and Bathsheba, adulteresses ; Rahab, a Canaanite ; and Ruth, a Moabitess (see Neh. xiii. 1), is another striking evidence of that extraordinary regard to truth which so distinguishes the Bible. The value of any illustration of the truth of the Bible will be appreciated by all who reflect, that on the truth of the Bible rests our welfare for eternity.

§ xiii. *Value of Profane History.*

1. Though the Bible is the great foundation upon which all history rests, ANCIENT PROFANE HISTORY affords assistance in the study of it. Thus :

Gen. xvi. 34 : " Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." Why ? From profane history (i. e. from a fragment of Manetho, preserved by Josephus), we learn that the Egyptians, about 2159 years before the birth of Christ, had been invaded and subdued by a tribe of Cushite shepherds from Arabia, whose yoke they had not long shaken off. Hence their prejudice against the family of Jacob coming from the neighbourhood (Palestine) to which these shepherds had been expelled ; which perhaps also explains Gen. xlii. 9, " Ye are spies," &c., xliii. 32.

Thus the Providence of God overruled oppression and prejudice to become a shield to his Church : for by their following a profession thus despised by the Egyptians, that evil communication was checked which might have immediately corrupted their good manners, and plunged them into idolatry ; and profane history assists us to see this.

So, again, the best commentary on Deut. xxviii., and our Lord's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, is Josephus's Jewish Wars. Does our Lord, for instance, say, Luke xix. 43, " Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee," &c. ? Josephus gives a literal fulfilment of it, telling us, that Titus did thus surround Jerusalem with a wall.

Matt. xxiv. 14. We should have a very inadequate conception of the extent to which this was fulfilled without the aid of profane history, the Acts of the Apostles not

noticing scarcely any other than the travels of St. Paul, and evidently not all of his. But from profane history chiefly we learn that the Gospel was preached in Idumea, Syria, and Mesopotamia by Jude; in Egypt, Marmorica, Mauritania, and other parts of Africa, by Mark, Simon, and Jude; in Ethiopia, by Candaces' Eunuch and Matthias; in Pontus, Galatia, and the neighbouring parts of Asia, by Peter; in the territories of the Seven Asiatic Churches, by John; in Parthia, by Matthew; in Scythia, by Philip and Andrew; in the northern and western parts of Asia, by Bartholomew; in Persia, by Simon and Jude; in Media, Carmania, and several eastern parts, by Thomas; through the vast tract from Jerusalem, round about unto Illyricum, by Paul: as also in Italy, and probably in Spain, Gaul, and Britain; in most of which places churches were planted within thirty years after the death of Christ, a period ten years earlier than the destruction of Jerusalem. See Doddridge.

Acts ix. 31: "Then had the disciples rest." This rest cannot be attributed to the conversion of Saul, as the persecution continued three years after. But profane history enables us to account for it. The rest here mentioned corresponds exactly in time (A.D. 40) with the attempt, which profane history informs us, the Emperor Caligula made to set up his statue in the Holy of Holies. The consternation into which this threatened profanation of their temple threw the Jews, diverted their attention for a season even from that on which they were so intently set—namely, the persecution of the Christian church; and hence the disciples had rest.—See Paley.

Acts xvii. 16, &c.: "Full of idols." In confirmation of this, profane history tells us that Athens had more images than all the rest of Greece; but, further than this, profane history speaks of Athens as in a peculiar manner the eye of Greece, the learned city, the school of the world; and hence, in connection with this passage, instructs us in a most important truth—namely, "How little avail genius and learning to preserve men from the grossest folly, if they have not the guidance of God's word!" (Rom. i. 22.)

Acts. xxiv. 25. From the very surface of this narrative we see how much more anxious Paul was for the salvation of Felix's soul, than for his own deliverance from prison and from death. But Josephus tells us that Felix was noto-

rious for oppression, and was living in adultery with Drusilla, who was the wife of a foreign king. This leads us yet more to admire the Apostle, illustrating the peculiar propriety of his reasoning of righteousness, &c.; the delicacy as well as fidelity of his preaching, in his seeking to produce conviction of sin, not so much by upbraiding Felix for his iniquity, by charging him with unrighteousness, intemperance, &c., as by reasoning with him on the loveliness of those graces of which he was destitute.

2. Under the head of profane history may be mentioned MODERN TRAVELS in eastern countries, which often throw light on Scripture. Thus, in confirmation of ancient profane history, and in attestation of the truth of Scripture, in reference to the idolatry of Athens:—About sixty years ago, Dr. Chandler and Mr. Stuart found traces of the grossest idolatry among the ruins of that celebrated city; for instance, on the front of a Doric portico was an inscription, which showed that the Athenians worshipped not only the Roman emperors, but their descendants; there was a statue to Julia, the daughter of Augustus (infamous for her profligacy), on the pediment of which she was styled the Goddess Julia Augusta Providence—i. e. no less a Deity than Providence itself. See Horne's Introduction, vol. i.

Keith has also shown, in many particulars, the value of modern travels in illustrating the fulfilment of prophecy; as, for instance, the present barrenness of Judea contrasted with its former great fertility, as described by Scripture. Voltaire ridiculed the idea of the possibility of its having been so fertile and populous as represented in Holy Writ; but Volney, another infidel, has in his travels accumulated facts, which in the most remarkable manner confirm the declarations of Scripture. Thus by the assistance of modern travels, we see that those who intended to undermine, become the supporters of our faith, through the overruling providence of Him who taketh the wise in their own craftiness and maketh the wrath of man to praise Him.

Dr. E. S. Clarke and others, who have travelled in Judea, are able to identify the very spots where events recorded in the Bible took place. Thus, the very brook where David (B.C. 1063, i. e. 2900 years ago) chose five smooth stones with which to encounter Goliath is yet to be noticed. It has, he says, refreshed many a thirsty pilgrim travelling

from Jaffa (the ancient Joppa) to Jerusalem, all of whom must pass it in their way, nothing having occurred to alter the face of the valley of Elah and the surrounding country through which it runs.

§ xiv. *Manners and Customs of Eastern Nations.*

The manners and customs of Eastern nations open a wide field; in reference to which, works written professedly on the subject must be consulted—such as Burder, Harmer, &c. The importance of consulting such works may however be here illustrated.

Houses, Roofs, &c.

Deut. xxii. 8: "When thou buildest a new house," &c., "battlements," &c.

Are we surprised this should be the subject of a Divine command? A knowledge of the manners and customs of Eastern countries will explain it. The roofs of their houses were, as they are to this day, flat, and very much walked upon. Here they enjoyed the cool refreshing breezes of the evening, conversed with one another, as, 1 Sam. ix. 25, Samuel with Saul. Here they offered up their devotions (Acts x. 9, "Peter," &c.), and retired to rest.

From Nehemiah viii. 16, we learn that the Feast of Tabernacles was kept by the people making themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house. How needful, therefore, that the roof should have battlements? while this command affords another illustration of the value which the Bible sets on human life; a disregard of which is so striking a feature of all false religions. (Ps. lxxiv. 20.)

Mark xiii. 15. In our Lord's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, to express the urgency of the danger and the necessity of immediate flight, He says, "Let him that is on the house-top *not* go down into the house, neither enter therein," &c. How, then, could he escape? The roofs being so much used had staircases outside, leading from the top of the house to the street. Houses in the East are built in the form of a square, with an open courtyard in the midst, on each side of which are the apartments.

Dress.

Luke xii. 35: "Let your loins be girded about," &c.; a figure to express preparation for the discharge of duty.

To those, however, familiar only with our modes of dress, this and other expressions require some explanation.

The upper garment in Eastern countries was an oblong piece of cloth, square at the corners, something like the plaid of a Scotch Highlander, about five yards long by five feet wide. This, on ordinary occasions, they threw loosely over them; but when setting out on a journey, or preparing for any work requiring great exertion, they tucked it up with a girdle. Thus Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 46) girded up his loins and ran before Ahab; and thus Elisha (2 Kings iv. 29), urging Gehazi to make haste, bid him gird up his loins and go.

Girdles were usually much ornamented (so as to be an important article of traffic, Prov. xxxi. 24). This explains why Elijah and John the Baptist, whose peculiar office called them in an especial manner to shew abstraction from the world, are described as wearing leathern girdles, i. e. girdles of the commonest kind, altogether unornamented.

When about to exert their strength by the use of their arm, removing the heavy folds of this loose dress they thus laid the arm bare, or revealed it.

This will explain such passages as Isa. lii. 10, "Make bare," &c., i. e. hath discovered and put forth his great power, which for a long time seemed to be hid and unemployed. See also chap. liii. 1, "To whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" i. e. who observes that he is about to exert his power? When this outer garment was thrown off, the persons were said to be "naked," though they had on an inner garment, or close-bodied frock: thus, (2 Sam. vi. 20), David; (John xxi. 7), Peter; (John xiii.), our Blessed Lord. It was the outer garment He laid aside when, the evening before his crucifixion, he gave that remarkable instance of his love, which was to be to them both an example of humility, and an emblem of his atonement (ver. 8).

In that most touching farewell which Paul took of the Ephesian elders (Acts xx.), when at parting, we are told (ver. 37), "they all wept sore;" one of the solemn appeals which the Apostle makes, as proving his sincerity, is, that he had coveted no man's apparel; i. e., no man's *clothes*. The force of this is lost, if we do not know that in the East

an important part of a man's wealth is in the apparel, the changes of raiment, which he possesses. Thus our Lord says, (Matt. vi. 19, &c.) "treasures where *moth*," &c. See also James v. 2; Job xxvii. 16; "though they heap, &c. raiment as," &c.; also Gen. xlv. 22; changes of raiment being among their most valued presents (2 Kings v).

Eccles. ix. 8: "Let thy garments be always white." This would seem a strange direction as addressed to a man in Europe; but in the East the general dress, especially among the higher classes, was white; and therefore the beauty of the dress consisted, not in the shape, for that never varied, but in its whiteness. Hence the injunction implies, "Do not think religion requires you to be negligent; to affect meanness of dress, inconsistent with your station in life." In the spirit of the Apostle's direction (1 Tim. iv. 4).

Jerem. xxxvi. 23, 24. In connexion with an account which shewed the utmost contempt and defiance of God (Jehoiakim cutting with a penknife and casting into the fire God's prophecy against him), it is mentioned, as an awful proof of the hardness of their hearts, that they did not rend their garments, i. e. tear their clothes. The meaning is, they gave not even any outward sign of sorrow, alarm, or repentance: because, in Eastern countries, rending the garment was the outward sign of expressing such feelings. How unlike his father Josiah (2 Kings xxii. 11). Even Ahab rent his clothes (1 Kings xxi. 27). We have other instances in Jacob, Gen. xxxvii. 34; Job i. 20; Ezra ix. 3; and an admonition founded on it (Joel ii. 13), "Rend your heart," &c.

Joshua v. 15: "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place, &c., is holy." This was the highest acknowledgment of the Divine presence, customary among Eastern nations. See Josh. vi. 2, "The Lord said," &c.; and Exod. iii. 5; implying that this Captain of the Lord's host was God the Son.

Our blessed Lord, when giving his first commission to his Apostles, bids them take sandals, not shoes (Matt. x. 10; Mark vi. 9). A knowledge of Eastern customs is necessary to enable us to see the meaning and the propriety of such a direction on so solemn an occasion. The sandal was only the sole of a shoe tied under the foot; shoes were

of more delicate use, made of softer leather, whereas the sandal was sometimes made even of rushes or of the bark of palm trees. This explanation will shew the great moral lesson implied by this injunction; the spirit of which appears to be, "Go in the readiest, plainest manner. Do not be studious of ease; be self-denying, humble. Go as you are, depending on my providence for your protection, and upon my blessing for your reward." See Lightfoot.

Matt. xxii. 11: "Had not on a wedding garment, &c., cast him into outer darkness, &c. weeping," &c. If we are ignorant of the manners and customs of the East, this punishment would appear to us very severe. How could the man be expected to have a wedding garment fit for the banquet of a king, who had only just been taken from the highways—a beggar? But when we know that this garment was provided at the expense of the king, and placed full in view; and that not putting it on was considered a direct insult to him; we then enter into its meaning, and learn from it, that a contempt of God's *appointed method of salvation* will involve the utter destruction of the soul. "Without faith it is impossible to please God; without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Rev. xix. 8. iii. 18; Rom. xiii. 14.

Luke vii. 37, 38. The woman bringing an alabaster box of ointment, which was of very great value, and anointing our Lord's feet, might seem to us a very strange custom; but in those countries it was a mark of the greatest respect, and was especially noticed by our Lord as such (v. 46); her example in this act teaching us, as Bishop Hall remarks, that the soul that is truly touched with a sense of its sin can think nothing too good or too dear for Christ.

Various other Manners and Customs.

D'Avrieux gives a remarkable instance of an Arab, who, having received a wound in his jaw, chose to hazard his life rather than suffer his surgeon to take off his beard.

To have the beard plucked was considered a greater disgrace than among us to be publicly whipped and branded with a hot iron. This will explain various passages of Scripture: 2 Sam. x. 4, 5; Isa. vii. 20; also l. 6, expressive of the utter contempt and detestation to which our Blessed Lord, in love to sinful man, surrendered himself.

Matt. ix. 17: "Neither put new wine into old bottles." Why not? Because their bottles were made of skin, not glass, and hence, like those of the Gibeonites (Josh. ix. 4), might become rent.

Ps. cxix. 83: "I am become like a bottle in the smoke." A leathern bottle would thus become shrivelled and useless; and thus had sorrow dried up his beauty and strength, so that David seemed to himself to have become useless and despicable.

Ps. lvi. 8: "Put thou my tears into thy bottle." Mourners' tears were put into a bottle as a remembrance of affection. So David prays that God will remember, and not forget, his sorrow.

Prov. xxi. 17: "He that loveth oil shall not be rich." Why not? Oil was much used in their luxurious feasts, and was therefore put for such. "Often, those who once could not live without dainties, have come to want necessities."

How could the woman (Luke vii.), while Jesus sat at meat, wash his feet when she was standing *behind* him? Because they did not sit, as we do, at table, but reclined with their feet on a couch, which is sometimes called in Scripture a bed; as Esth. i. 6, giving an account of Ahasuerus's ostentatious feast.

So, John xiii. 23, John is spoken of as leaning on Jesus' bosom. They sat so that the shoulders of one were turned towards the breast of the other, all their right hands turned towards the dishes, and they leaned on their left shoulder.

In that very striking account of the first meeting of Saul and Samuel (1 Sam. ix.), shewing "how little we can, by the beginning of any action (ver. 3), guess at God's intention in the conclusion," the cook was ordered (ver. 23, 24) to set "the shoulder" before Saul. The shoulder of lamb, eaten with butter and milk poured over it, is reckoned a peculiar delicacy in the East. Josephus says it was called the *Royal* portion.

Deut. xxv. 4: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." We use a flail, but they turned in oxen on the barn-floor, to tread it out. "The Moors and Arabs," says Dr. Shaw, "continue to tread out their corn in this way."

The prophet Isaiah, looking forward to the time of the

Gospel when the Spirit should be poured out from on high, says (Isa. xxxii. 20), "Blessed are they that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass." Sowing beside all waters, sending forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass, presents a difficulty to those acquainted only with our mode of farming; but this exactly answers to the manner of planting rice, for they sow it upon the waters, and before sowing, while the earth is covered with water, they cause the ground to be trodden by oxen, asses, &c., that go mid-leg deep, and this is the way of preparing the ground for sowing. (See Lowth on Isaiah.)

Matt. xxiv. 41: "Two women shall be grinding at the mill," &c. In those countries, and in that age of the world, the immense advantages from subjecting wind and water to the turning of mills, was unknown; their corn was ground by a hand-mill, turned chiefly by female slaves. This shews the deep degradation imposed on Samson (Judg. xvi. 21), and threatened to Babylon (Isa. xlvii. 1, 2), "Come down, &c., take the millstones and grind," &c. See Judg. ix. 53. the *woman* throwing the millstone. They usually ground it at break of day: hence the noise of millstones was a token of a populous and thriving country. See, in reference to this, Jer. xxv. 10: Rev. xviii. 22, "The sound of the millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;" referring to the desolation of new Babylon—Papal Rome.

Luke ix. 5: "Shake off the very dust from," &c.; and again, x. 11, "even the very dust we do wipe off," &c. We have an instance of their doing so (Acts xiii. 51) at Antioch; thus expressing utter renunciation, so as to have nothing with them in common. If we despise the Gospel, God will despise us (Luke x. 16).

Jer. xxxvi. : that which, ver. 18, is called a book, is in ver. 23 called a roll. They being ignorant of the art of printing, which was not discovered till 2000 years after, their books consisted of pieces of parchment rolled upon two sticks. So Luke iv. 17: Our Lord literally "unrolled" the book.

Matt. xx. 6: "And about the eleventh hour he went out, &c., and saith unto them, Why stand ye here *all the day* idle?" At eleven o'clock, according to our mode of computing time, not half the day is gone; but the Jews began

their day at six o'clock in the morning. This fact adds to the force of Peter's reasoning (Acts ii. 15), "Seeing it is but the third hour of the day;" that is, nine o'clock in the morning.

Matt. xxvii. 45: "Now there was darkness over all the land, from the sixth hour unto the ninth hour;" i. e. from 12 to 3 o'clock, and the passover being always kept at the full moon, this could not arise in the ordinary course of nature from an eclipse of the sun.

Matt. xiv. 25: "And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them walking on the sea;" i. e. between the hours of 3 and 6 in the morning. The Jews in these later times divided the night into four watches, ending respectively at 9, 12, 3, and 6 o'clock, having learnt this division from the Romans.

In God's awful denunciation against the covetousness of the Jews, shewing how vain is man's effort without God's blessing, it is said (Isa. v. 10), "Ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah." A bath was about seven gallons and a half, so that an acre of land would not yield a gallon of wine. An ephah was but one-tenth of an homer; so that, instead of the seed yielding, as it often did in that fruitful country, an hundred-fold (Matt. xiii.), nine-tenths of the seed would be actually lost.

Again, some light is thrown upon the parable of the Debtors (Matt. xviii.), by our knowledge of the fact that a talent is 750 oz. of silver, which, at 5s. per ounce, is 187*l.* 10s.; and the Roman penny, one-eighth of an ounce, or 7½*d.* According to Dean Prideaux's computation, the 10,000 talents referred to in this parable, if talents of gold, would amount to 72,000,000*l.* sterling; an immense sum, shewing the number and weight of our offences against God, and our utter incapacity of making him any satisfaction, and the peculiar aggravation of an unforgiving spirit.

Matt. xxvi. 15: "They covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver." The thirty pieces of silver, or thirty shekels, referred to here, was but 3*l.* 10s. 8*d.*; and this was the price, as appears from Exod. xxi. 32, that was paid for a slave, or servant, when killed by a beast. What a striking fulfilment of the prophecy, Isa. liii. 3, "He is despised and rejected of men!" What a motive to us to love him! 2 Cor. viii. 9.

To these topics, as of importance in the interpretation of the Bible, many more might be added; such as a knowledge of the original languages in which the Old and New Testaments were written, &c. But these few hints are sufficient to enforce the duty of diligence and humility; and to shew that, however extensive be our learning, we may, as the bee does, bring the sweets of every flower to this, as our hive.

§ xv. *On the Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions of the Bible.*

From the knowledge thus proved to be necessary to a right understanding of the Bible, surely enough has been said to shew that, whatever difficulties or seeming contradictions may occur to us in reading it, they most probably arise from our ignorance or inattention; and this admits of abundant illustration.

In Judges i. 19, it is said "the Lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." Voltaire scoffs at this, as though implying that the Lord of heaven and earth is represented as being baffled by the chariots of iron, whereas the term "he" refers to Judah, not to the Lord. Judah's faith failed him, and he found that according to his faith so was it unto him. (Matt. ix. 29.) Weak in faith, he was weak in power. Yet Voltaire was one of the most learned and most acute of infidels. But the frivolity of such objections made by such men shews how hatred of the truth blinds the mind to the perception of it, and may well give us repose when assailed by objections from those who cannot pretend to their ability, especially when we can take shelter under the names of Bacon, Boyle, Locke, and Newton.

Acts ix. 7, referring to the circumstance of Paul's miraculous conversion, speaks of the men who journeyed with him hearing a voice, but seeing no man. In Acts xxii. 9, it is said they heard not the voice of him that spoke. A little consideration, however, soon reconciles the seeming contradiction. They heard a voice, but not the words spoken; a sound, but did not understand the meaning of it. Just as we are told (Gen. xlviii. 8) that Israel beheld

Joseph's sons, while in the tenth verse it is said his eyes were dim so that he could not see; i. e. he could see, but not distinctly—could not distinguish the features unless they came near.

Acts xvi. 11, 12, where we have the account of the first introduction of Christianity into Europe, it speaks of Philippi in Macedonia as a colony; and verse 21 implies that it was a *Roman* colony. The silence of contemporary profane history as to this fact rendered it a difficulty, even to learned men, and threw the suspicion of inaccuracy upon Luke's narrative; but some ancient coins have been since discovered, on which Philippi is recorded under this character, particularly one which states that Julius Cæsar himself bestowed the dignity and privileges of a Roman colony on the city Philippi, which were afterwards confirmed and augmented by Augustus.

Sometimes, though comparatively very seldom, the translation may be improved, or the original will admit of another rendering, and thus the difficulty may be removed.

2 Sam. xii. 31. David is said to have put the Ammonites under saws and under harrows of iron, &c.; which gives the impression of great cruelty on his part. Were there no answer to this, we must not shrink from charging him with whatever guilt might properly attach to the act, the Bible itself furnishing the principle by which to do so. But the original Hebrew admits of its being rendered instead of "under" "to" saws, &c., which implies nothing more than employing them as slaves in the most mean and laborious offices. The word translated "harrows of iron" may also be rendered "iron mines." It is, indeed, said (1 Chron. xx. 3), that David cut them with saws; but seven of the Hebrew manuscripts collated by Dr. Kennicott have the word which means, "he put them to saws," &c. See H. Horne, vol. i.

This illustration has been given to shew the value of a knowledge of the learned languages, and of those diligent researches which learned men have made to throw light on Scripture. "Pertness and ignorance," as Bishop Horne remarks, "may ask a question in three lines, which it may cost thirty pages to answer." But thus has God sanctified the use of learning, and would teach the unlearned respect

for it. Mystery is only another name for our ignorance, "and those passages," as Boyle says, "which teach us nothing else, may at least teach us humility." We may also be assured, that while "the scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not" (Prov. xiv. 6), and although God hath in his righteous judgment appointed that "the wicked shall not understand" (Dan. xii. 10), "the meek will he teach his way," "the meek will he beautify with salvation." Ps. cxlix. 4.

§ xvi. *Quotations illustrating the leading object of this chapter.*

Mosheim, speaking of the method of interpreting the Scriptures, and teaching religion in the first century of the Christian church, says, "Those who performed the office of interpreters, studied, above all things, plainness and perspicuity. The great study of those who embraced the Gospel was rather to express its Divine influence in their dispositions and actions, than to examine its doctrines with an excessive curiosity, or to explain them by the rules of human wisdom."

Referring to the period of the Reformation, Melancthon says, "It is necessary in the church, diligently to investigate and adhere to the simple, natural grammatical sense of Scripture. We are to listen to the Divine word, not to corrupt it. We must not play tricks with it, by fanciful interpretations, as many in all ages have done. The plain, natural sense of Scripture always carries with it the richest and most valuable instruction."

Luther says: "The literal meaning of Scripture is the whole foundation of faith, the only thing that stands its ground in distress and temptation."

Hooker says: "I hold it for a most infallible rule in exposition of Sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst."

The following are given as illustrations of the violations of this rule, in addition to that already given, p. 69.

2 Tim. ii. 17, 18: "Hymeneus and Philetus. . . saying that the resurrection is passed already;" that is, they spiritualized the plain declarations of the Bible on this subject,

declaring that such passages were not to be taken in their simple, natural, grammatical sense, but as intending only a spiritual resurrection from ignorance and error.

Lampe, whose Commentary on St. John, Hartwell Horne describes (vol. ii.) as unquestionably the most valuable work on that Gospel that was ever published, endeavours to shew, from the miracle of the marriage in Cana, that by the bridegroom is meant the governors of the Jewish church; the bride is the Jewish church itself; the marriage is the Christian dispensation; the failing of the wine, the departure of the Spirit of God from the Jewish church, which had begun to depart from the purity of the Law; the mother of our Lord is the heavenly Jerusalem, bringing into the liberty of the Gospel the children of the Jewish church; but she is reproved for impatience, not knowing the times and seasons or the hour, which had not yet come. The water is changed into wine; that is, prophecy and the Law are changed into the Gospel, with much more of the same kind. (Lampe, vol. i. pp. 518—520.)

The fascination of the ingenuity of such interpretations constitutes their peculiar danger, especially when adopted by men so learned and pious as Lampe. Cardinal Bellarmin, one of the most learned and upright of his order, whom Pope Sextus V. condemned for not going far enough in the assertion of Papal power, attempts to prove, from a comparison of Acts x. 13, "Rise, Peter, kill," &c. with John xxi. 16, that the duty of the Pope, as the successor of Peter, is to put heretics to death; an interpretation which seals the death-warrant of the Protestant church and the liberties of mankind. See T. H. Horne, vol. ii. p. 770.

On the mysterious doctrines of predestination, election, &c., Bishop Horsley says: "Differences of opinion upon these subjects have subsisted, among the best Christians, from the beginning, and will subsist, I am persuaded, to the end." And the martyr Ridley observes: "In these matters I am so fearful, that I dare not speak further; yea, almost none otherwise, than the text doth, as it were, lead me by the hand."

"The right way of interpreting Scripture, is to take it as we find it, without any attempts to force it into any particular system." (Cecil.)

"The Scriptures are the mysteries of God," says Bishop

Jewel : " let us not be curious : let us not seek to know more than God hath revealed by them. They are the sea of God : let us take heed that we be not drowned by them. They are the fire of God : let us take comfort by their heat, and warily take heed they burn us not. They that gaze over-hârdly upon the sun, take blemish in their eye-sight."

Boyle says : " It ought rather to recommend than disparage the Scriptures, that what is revealed is so copious and extensive, that, like a river, it will supply a lamb with what may quench its thirst, and cannot be exhausted by an elephant." And again : " The Scriptures being composed of several obscure texts of Scripture, mixed with clear ones, several devout persons have rather chosen to read other books, which, being free from difficulties, might promise more instruction ; but as the moon, notwithstanding her spots, gives more light than the stars that are luminous ; so the Scripture, notwithstanding its dark passages, will afford a Christian more light than the best authors." (Boyle on the Style of the Scriptures.)

" Scripture doth best interpret itself." (Lowth.)

" Particular diligence should be used in comparing the parallel texts of the Old and New Testaments. It should be a rule with every one who would read the Holy Scriptures with advantage and improvement, to compare every text which may seem either important for the doctrine it may contain, or remarkable for the turn of expression, with the parallel passages in other parts of Holy Writ, i. e. with passages in which the subject matter is the same, the sense equivalent, or the turn of expression similar." (Bishop Horsley.) These parallel passages are easily found by the marginal references in Bibles of the larger form.

Bishop Horsley's remark may be thus illustrated : By referring to Gal. vi. 15, with v. 6, and 1 Cor. vii. 19, to explain what is meant by " If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," and by comparing these parallel texts, we learn he is a new creature who is under the influence of a faith which worketh by love, keeping the commandments of God ; the term new creature implying a total change of principle, resulting from God's grace ; (creation being the prerogative of God ;) which a reference to John iii. 5, &c. confirms. So again, 2 Cor. i. 21, God is said to have

anointed us. In a parallel passage, 1 John ii. 20, where this turn of expression is used, the 27th verse of that chapter explains it to mean teaching, enduing with the gifts of the Spirit.

Bishop Horsley continues: "It is incredible, to any one who has not made the experiment, what a proficiency may be gained in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, by studying the Scriptures in this manner, without any other commentary or exposition than what the different parts of the sacred volume mutually furnish for each other. Let the most illiterate Christian study them in this manner, and let him never cease to pray for the illumination of that Spirit by which these books are dictated, and the whole compass of abstruse philosophy and recondite history shall furnish no argument with which the perverse will of man shall be able to shake this *learned* Christian's faith." (Bishop Horsley.)

"O God, thou hast revealed more than we can know; enough to make us happy! Teach us a sober knowledge, a contented ignorance." (Bishop Hall.)

QUESTIONS ON CHAP. IV.

The Scriptures speak of God as having hands, eyes, &c.; as repenting, swearing, hardening the heart, &c.; how are such passages to be understood? [p. 55.] What dangers must be guarded against on this subject?

What caution is necessary in the application to ourselves of Scripture examples, and also in reference to the silence of Scripture in not condemning a wrong action? [p. 57.]

To ascertain whether you rightly understand any doctrine, what must you do? and also, what must you do to render the doctrine of use to yourself? [p. 58.]

Shew that he who slights the doctrines of Christianity undermines its morality. [p. 59.]

Illustrate the practical use we should make of the promises and threatenings of Scripture. [pp. 60, 61.]

What are Archbishop Secker's rules for the interpretation of the Ten Commandments? [p. 61.]

Give some illustration of the figurative language adopted by the Prophets, and of the meaning of such figures as the falling of stars, &c. [p. 63, 64.]

What is Sir Isaac Newton's remark on the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy? [p. 66.]

What two rules are of importance in the interpretation of Types? [p. 68.]

What must you particularly guard against in the interpretation of

Parables; and what is the great rule for their interpretation? Illustrate these by examples. [pp. 68—71.]

Shew the importance of attending to context, words, names. [pp. 72—82.] Explain John ix. 3.; 1 Kings xxii. 16, &c. &c. &c.

Illustrate the value of Geography in the interpretation of Scripture, and give the names, boundaries, size, and divisions of the Holy Land. [pp. 83—90.]

Shew also, by some example, the value of a knowledge of Natural History, Chronology, Profane History, Manners and Customs of Eastern Nations, as to their dwellings, dress, &c. [pp. 90—105.]

What does the judicious Hooker consider to be a most infallible rule in the interpretation of Scripture? [p. 107.]

Illustrate by an example the danger of disregarding it. [p. 107.] Should the difficulties of Scripture discourage us from reading it? What caution does Bishop Jewel, and what encouragement does Boyle, give on this subject? [p. 108, 109.]

In the interpretation of Scripture, respecting what does Bishop Horsley recommend particular diligence? and if such diligence be used in a spirit of prayer, what does he say will be the result? [p. 110.]

N. B. This list of questions may be much enlarged, particularly by referring to the different passages of Scripture explained in each section, and requiring an account of such explanations.

CHAP. V.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE JEWS.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *Its distinguishing feature a Theocracy.* § ii. *Their Laws.* § iii. *The Sabbatical Year, and the Jubilee, as illustrating their Government and Laws.*

THE great purpose for which the Jews were selected by God explains the peculiarity of that constitution by which they were formed into a nation immediately on leaving Egypt.

As has been already noticed (more particularly in connexion with the prophecies and types interwoven with their institutions and history, see p. 51), the great purpose of their selection by God from the rest of mankind, was through them to prepare for the coming of Christ, the world's great Deliverer.

But what was the great danger which, humanly speaking, threatened the defeat of this purpose? Their apostasy into idolatry. The world around them had apostatized into ido-

latry; that is, it had sunk into the total forgetfulness that the world was God's world, formed by His power, and governed by His will. The tendency of their own hearts was toward idolatry (Ezek. xx. 8).

Hence, as subordinate to this great purpose of preparing for the coming of Christ, their government was so framed, and so enforced, as to be a constant check upon idolatry. It was so framed and so enforced as to be, indirectly, a protest against the idolatry of the world (Numb. xxxiii. 4; 1 Sam. v. vi.; Dan. iii. vi.; and the prophetic writings throughout); but its more immediate object was the preservation of the Jews from idolatry.

To this end a constant, visible, miraculous interposition of God's providence attended them; which constant visible interposition of God's providence, connecting temporal rewards with obedience, and temporal punishments with disobedience, brought before them at each step, in opposition to every form of idolatry, God as the only disposer of all things, of happiness and misery, of life and of death. The spirit of their dispensation, in this respect, is expressed in the song of Moses, Deut. xxxii.: "See now" (from the rewards in this life following obedience, from the punishment now following disobedience to my commands)—"see now, that I, even I, am He, and there is no God with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."

§ i. *Its distinguishing feature a Theocracy.*

As expressive of this peculiarity of their government, it has been called a Theocracy; and an explanation of the meaning of this term will further illustrate the remarks already made. It is called a Theocracy, because God, as their Governor, assumed the title of King. The Tabernacle, and afterwards the Temple, built of the richest materials, was considered as His palace, in which in a peculiar sense He manifested Himself as their King enthroned on the mercy-seat: Exod. xxv. 8, 9; 1 Chron. xxix. 1; Ps. cxxxii. 5. He performed towards them those acts which are usually performed by earthly sovereigns. For instance:

God appointed to each family that proportion of the Promised Land which it was to possess, varying from sixteen to

twenty-five acres to each, according to the different estimates made of the extent of Judea (Numb. xxvi. 53). This land they held, independent of all temporal superiors, by direct tenure from the Lord Jehovah, their sovereign ; by whose power they were to acquire their territory, and under whose protection only they could retain it. On this principle, the lands so distributed were inalienable. "The land shall not be sold for ever ; for the land is mine, saith the Lord : ye are strangers and sojourners with me" (Lev. xxv. 23. See 1 Kings xxi. 3, Naboth).

As to the *legislative* part of their government, God was the author of their laws. No authority was vested in any one man, or body of men, in the Jewish government, not even in the whole nation assembled, to make new laws or alter old ones ; their sovereign, Jehovah, reserving this power to himself (Deut. iv. 1, 2 ; xii. 32).

As to the *executive* part of their government, the judges and kings were His viceroys, enjoying only a delegated authority, to which they were required constantly to refer : "they were merely instruments employed by God to facilitate the regular administration of his extraordinary providence" (Numb. xxvii. 15, &c. ; Deut. xvii. 15 ; and 1 Sam. ix. 16, the circumstances of the appointment of Saul ; and chap. xv., the cause of his rejection).

It is obvious that such a form of government would be a continual proof, a constant appeal to their senses, that the gods of the heathen were no gods ; but that the Lord God of Israel was God alone of all the kingdoms of the earth. (See 2 Kings xix., Hezekiah's prayer when threatened by Sennacherib ; whose whole history, as recorded in the Bible, is a remarkable illustration of what is here said. Refer to Isai. x. 5, &c.)

§ ii. *Their Laws.*

As an assistance to our better understanding the government of the Jews, their laws have been divided into three parts ; moral, judicial, and ceremonial. The moral, contained in the Ten Commandments ; judicial, regulating their civil government ; ceremonial, determining their religious worship.

It is a remarkable feature of these laws, that all their political institutions were made entirely subordinate to their

religious; thus suggesting to the rulers of the world, in every age, on what alone the prosperity of any nation really depends (Prov. xiv. 34). As has been already hinted, p. 15, reliance on Providence, in the path of obedience, was the foundation of their civil government, the spirit and the principle of their constitution. (See Graves on the Pentateuch.)

But the laws of the Jews being in many respects so different from those to which we are accustomed, the following hints may be useful, as shewing, that, amidst the minute details to which they descend (even to the colour of the fringes of their garments, Numb. xv. 38), may be traced the wisdom of their appointment; and the germ of those principles which were afterwards fully developed in the Gospel.

Observe, then, with reference to the Mosaic Law,

1. Its adaptation to the circumstances of those for whom it was made.

The wisdom of a law appears in its adaptation to the character and circumstances of those for whom it is made. The Jews to whom this law was first addressed were only just delivered from the most abject slavery. To the great ignorance necessarily consequent on such a state was added, as their natural character, great stubbornness. They were a stiff-necked, a disobedient and gainsaying people, (Deut. xxxi. 27; Rom. x. 21) ever disposed to walk in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts. (Isa. lxxv. 2.) The law that should govern such a people must have reference to such ignorance and such stubbornness. Such a people would require to be treated very much as children, to whom it is not enough to give a few general rules, but we must descend to minute particulars, that by repeated acts of obedience in these little things, habits of obedience might be formed, and at every step some restraint on disobedience imposed by a positive prohibition. This is evidently the view given by the Apostle, Gal. iv.

2. The moral object of its rites and ceremonies.

As such a people would require, as children do, minute directions; so would they also require frequent appeals to their senses; a law abounding in rites and ceremonies, to fix their attention and affect their heart: and such was the Mosaic law. Of the moral object of those rites and cere-

monies more immediately affecting their religious worship, notice has been taken already in page 51. See also pages 120, &c. ; but the moral object of those regulating their conduct as members of Society, may also be easily shewn. Thus Numb. xv. 38, the reason of the direction as to the ribbon to be put on the fringes of their garments, at once explains the moral object for which such a direction was given by God ; " that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them." That, distinguished by dress from the heathen world around them, they might, wherever they were, be reminded of the object for which they were so distinguished to be a holy people to the Lord. Thus dressed, it was impossible they could join in any idolatrous festival without having all eyes drawn to them.

Again, as evil communications corrupt good manners, the minute directions as to their food, what animals might or might not be eaten, &c. (referred to Lev. xi. &c.) operated as a constant check on idolatry, by restraining their intercourse with their idolatrous neighbours. It will be seen from these directions, as Bishop Patrick remarks, that the Jews killed for sacrifices and food whatever were sacred animals to their neighbours ; and such as were unclean to the Jews were accounted holy among the heathen ; as swine were considered sacred to Venus, an owl to Minerva, a hawk to Apollo, an eagle to Jupiter, and a dog to Hecate. Many reptiles also were held sacred by the heathen, all of which were unclean to the Israelites. (Rom. i. 23.)

The eating of blood, so pointedly forbidden to the Jews (Lev. xix. 26—28), was very common in heathen feasts and sacrifices. It would thus appear that the Jews could scarcely ever eat and drink with the heathen, and thus one great snare to idolatry was removed ; for, as has been well remarked, " intimate friendships are in most cases formed at table, and with the man with whom I can neither eat nor drink, let our intercourse in business be what it may, I shall seldom become so familiar, as with him whose guest I am and he mine."

Besides these, there were many other prohibitions referring to the same object, namely, to keep them as far as possible from the religious practices of the heathen : thus Deut. xxii. 9, it was an idolatrous rite to sow barley and

dried grapes together ; by which they signified that their vineyards were consecrated to Ceres and Bacchus, and recommended to the protection of those heathen deities. Lev. xix. 27, refers to customs which we know, from the testimony of profane authors, as Homer, &c., as well as from Scripture (Jer. xvi. 6 ; 1 Kings xviii. 28), were religious rites of the heathen. Honey was probably forbidden for the same reason, and seething the kid in the mother's milk (Exod. xxiii. 19).

3. Its spirituality.

That is, it regarded principally the thoughts, and not the outward conduct only ; requiring obedience from an inward principle.

The Tenth Commandment, "Thou shalt not *covet*," &c., clearly shews this. It was by the right understanding of this commandment (Rom. vii.), Paul was led by the Holy Spirit so forcibly to feel his need of a Saviour.

4. Its principle.

The great inward principle it required, that on which all the law and the prophets hung, was love to God with all the heart, as the first and great commandment (Deut. vi. 5 ; xi. 13 ; xxx. 6) ; and the second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. xix. 18). The poor, the widow, the fatherless, the stranger, were to be especially the object of their regard. Enemies were to be the objects of their kindness (Exod. xxiii. 4, 5). They were particularly forbidden to abhor even an Egyptian, though the Egyptians abhorred them, and were the most cruel of their oppressors (Deut. xxiii. 7).

A merciful temper towards brutes was urged upon them as one of the conditions on which they were to expect the divine blessing on themselves in the land of promise (Deut. xxv. 4. xxii. 7).

5. Its impartiality.

Again and again Moses declares, God is no respecter of persons (Deut. x. 17). The idolatrous Hebrew city was to be given over to the same destruction as that denounced on the nations of Canaan. (Deut. xiii. 12, &c.)

As the love of God was the great principle every where enforced, so the want of this love, Moses forewarns them, would cause their rejection : "See, now, I have set before thee," &c. ; "love the Lord," &c. ; "but if thine heart

turn away," &c., "perish," &c. (Deut. xxx. 15, &c.) And again: "As the nations," &c., "so shall ye perish," &c. (Deut. viii. 20.)

6. Its subserviency to the Gospel.

It made no alteration in the mode of man's acceptance with God. We are informed, that it was added, not to set aside the promise, but "because of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19). In the awful circumstances of its promulgation (Exod. xix. xx.; Heb. xii.), and in the general severity of its enactments (Numb. ix. 9—13; Levit. vii. 20, 21, &c.), it forcibly pointed out man's exposure to the wrath of God, and the insufficiency of any thing which he could do to atone for sin; and thus, by deepening men's convictions of the evil of sin, it became a schoolmaster to lead to Christ (see Gal. iii. 24, and Epist. to Hebrews). Its perfection chiefly appears in its adaptation to this object; which having accomplished, like the morning star it gradually disappeared before the rising light of the Sun of Righteousness.

§ iii. *The Sabbatical Year, and the Jubilee, as illustrating their Government and Laws.*

These institutions place the peculiarity of the constitution of the Jewish nation in a very striking point of view.

The Sabbatical Year.

This was observed every seventh year, when,

1. The ground was to remain uncultivated in every respect; neither ploughing, sowing seed, planting, nor pruning the vineyard, &c., being permitted. What the ground produced of its own accord was to be devoted to charitable purposes (Exod. xxiii. 11). God, however, graciously promised, on their obedience to this command, so to bless the sixth year that it should yield fruit enough for three years (Levit. xxv. 2—21). Thus while the kind consideration of the stranger, the poor, the fatherless, the widow was enforced, they were reminded that their land was His property, and that His providence, and not their fruitful soil, was their security for its preservation.

2. Debts were to be remitted (Deut. xv. 1, 2).

3. Hebrew slaves were then set at liberty unless they voluntarily chose to remain in servitude (Exod. xxi. 2).

4. The Law was appointed to be read publicly in the ears of the people (Deut. xxxi. 10); and being a season of leisure from the cessation of agricultural employments, it was peculiarly favourable for religious instruction.

The Jubilee

was every seventh sabbatical, or fiftieth ordinary, year (Lev. xxv. 8). This great sabbath of the Jubilee was to be kept as other sabbatical years. The ground was to remain uncultivated, &c. But the peculiar rite of the Jubilee, as distinguished from other sabbatical years, was this: every Hebrew slave was then set at liberty, and returned home; and such lands as had been sold or mortgaged returned to their first owners, no one having the power to alienate his property from his family beyond this period. "Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man to his family," Lev. xxv. 10. The jubilee commenced by the sound of a trumpet on the evening of the Day of Atonement (Lev. xxv. 9); a time, Bishop Patrick remarks, peculiarly well chosen, as the Jews would be better disposed to forgive their brethren their debts, when they had been imploring pardon of God for their own transgressions.

The benefits of such an institution were many:

1. It was a check on oppression, and the inordinate desire of adding house to house and field to field; while it rescued every family from those peculiar temptations of abject poverty, which the misconduct of their ancestors might otherwise have entailed upon them.

2. It preserved their distinction of tribes; giving to each the strongest motive of interest to keep his genealogy, that he might prove his right to the inheritance of his forefathers.

3. By thus preserving the distinction of tribes, it was calculated to prepare for the promised coming of the Messiah, whom Jacob's prophecy, more than 1600 years before he came, had identified with the tribe of Judah. (Gen. xlix.)

4. It was typical of the spiritual liberty to be introduced by the Gospel dispensation. (Isa. lxi. 2, with Luke iv.)

5. It was one of the many proofs of the Divine authority under which Moses acted. If a legislator had dared to demand such a surrender of property every fifty years, would a people in actual possession of such property have yielded it up, but under the fullest conviction that it rested on a Divine command? The same remark applies to the provisions of the Sabbatical Year. That a people whose characteristic was stubbornness, and who was so characterised by the very man who gave the law (Deut. ix. 6), whose subsistence was derived from agriculture and pasturage, should have submitted to laws apparently so contradictory to their interests, is a striking evidence and illustration of the miraculous providence by which they were governed, and which formed the peculiar feature of their government as a Theocracy. (See Stillingfleet.)

QUESTIONS ON CHAP. V.

The distinguishing feature of the government of the Jews was a Theocracy—explain what is meant by this. [pp. 112, 113.]

What was the religious state of the world and of the Jews, which peculiarly called for such a form of government? [p. 111, 112.]

Shew that the great doctrine which this form of government proved and illustrated was the doctrine of Providence. [p. 112.]

As illustrating the spirit of the Mosaic law, shew (1), its adaptation to the circumstances of those for whom it was made—(2) the moral object of its rites and ceremonies—(3) that it required obedience from an inward principle—(4) shew what that principle was—(5) that it was impartially applied; and that (6), even in the general severity of its enactments, the Mosaic Law was subservient to the Gospel. [pp. 113—117.]

What were the Sabbatical Year and the Jubilee?—(2) How were they observed?—(3) Mention some of the benefits of these institutions; and particularly (4) what proof do they afford that the laws of Moses were the laws of God? [p. 117—119.]

CHAP. VI.

THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF THE JEWS.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *Its distinguishing feature.* § ii. *The persons conducting it.* § iii. *The places where it was conducted.* § iv. *The seasons when conducted ; daily, weekly, monthly, yearly.*

As the leading object of this little work is to direct the reader to the Scripture, and the subjects of this chapter are derived almost entirely from Scripture, it has been thought desirable to put the information intended to be conveyed by it chiefly in the form of a question, referring to the Scripture for an answer.

§ i. *Distinguishing feature of their Public Worship.*

The Jews had many ceremonies of purification, washing with water, &c. (Lev. xi.—xv.) What were these to represent to them?—A. *How much care the people of God should take to be separated and purified from every sin.*

But what was the distinguishing feature of their public worship?—A. *The offering of sacrifices.*

How may these sacrifices be divided?—A. 1. *Those when an animal was killed.* 2. *Those taken from the vegetable kingdom (as ears of corn, parched grain, frankincense, meal, bread, cakes, &c.)* 3. *And as accompaniments to these, a drink offering of wine.* (Exod. xxix. 40.)

Of these, which were the most important?—A. *Animal sacrifice.*

What animals were sacrificed?—A. *Oxen, sheep, goats, pigeons, and turtle-doves.* (Lev. i. 3. xiv. 22.)

What was it particularly required they should be?—Lev. xxii. 20; 1 Pet. i. 19.)

What is there in the disposition of the sheep or lamb which reminds you of the disposition of our Blessed Lord? (Matt. xi. 29; Isa. liii. 7; 2 Cor. x. 1.)

Is this the disposition you should cultivate?—(1 Pet. ii. 21.)

What were the three kinds of animal sacrifice?—A. 1. *Whole burnt-offerings* (Lev. vi. 9). 2. *Trespass or sin offerings* (in which there was no material difference), *offered*

for sins committed, not only against knowledge, but through ignorance (Lev. iv. 2—4). 3. *Peace offerings, imploring mercies desired, or acknowledging mercies received* (Lev. iii. 1).

What was mingling of the blood of animal sacrifice with such an offering, as a peace offering, calculated to teach them?—A. *That they were not worthy of the least of all God's mercies.*

Were any parts of the peace offerings eaten by the priests and people? (Exod. xviii. 12) What was implied in this? (*The great condescension of God in receiving them thus as guests at his table.*)

Some of the sacrifices were made on behalf of the NATION at large; others were the voluntary or prescribed offerings of individuals (as Lev. xii. 1—8; Luke ii. 24; Lev. xiv. 2—7; Matt. viii. 4).

But where must every sacrifice be offered?—(Lev. i. 3; Deut. xii. 5, &c.; 2 Chron. vii. 12.)

What benefit would arise from such a public and official superintendence of the offering?—A. *It would be a great check to idolatrous and unauthorized rites.*

Do we not read of Gideon, and Samuel, and David, and Elijah, building altars and offering sacrifices in other places?—A. *This was not lawful to be done but by prophets and inspired men, or at God's express command.*

Shew that God principally regarded the state of the heart in those who offered sacrifice.—(1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. l. 8; Isa. i. 11, "To what purpose," &c.; Jer. vii. 22, "I spake not unto your fathers . . . concerning burnt-offering"—i. e. 'I always laid a greater stress on obedience than on outward observances.' See also Micah vi. 6. even Balaam's view of this subject.

[On the intention of animal sacrifice, and in what sense the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin, see pp. 49.]

Where there was not a right state of the heart, how does God speak of the sacrifice? (*as an abomination*, Prov. xv. 8.)

What were the two most important parts of the offering of sacrifice, considered as an atonement for sin, 1. on the part of the offerer; 2. on the part of the priest?

On the part of the offerer, what was meant by his putting

his hands on the head of the victim?—A. *That he desired, by faith, to lay on it his iniquity* (Lev. i. 4, &c.; xvi. 21, where Aaron represented the nation; Isai. liii. 6).

On the part of the priest, what was meant by his sprinkling the blood on the altar, or bringing the blood out into the tabernacle and sprinkling it before the veil?—A. *That atonement was made for the sin of the offerer, and his pardon thereby sealed to him* (Lev. xvii. 11; xvi. 14).

[The particular forms of confession used here have been handed down to us by Jewish writers. "That," remarks Archbishop Magee, "prescribed for the individual, presenting his own sacrifice, seems particularly significant: 'O God, I have sinned; I have done perversely; I have trespassed before thee; I have done [*so and so*]. Lo, now I repent, and am truly sorry for my misdeeds: let, then, this victim be my expiation:'—i. e. Let the evils which in justice should have fallen on my head, light upon the head of this victim."—vol. i. p. 369.]

How does John the Baptist speak (John i. 29.) of our Blessed Lord?

In what remarkable circumstance did the sacrifice of Christ differ from all those under the Law?—A. *Our blessed Lord was not only the Subject of the offering, but the Priest who offered it* (Heb. ix. 14); thus, while by His sacrifice we are pardoned, by His continual intercession we are preserved (Heb. vii. 24, 25).

§ ii. *The Persons conducting the public worship of the Jews.*
The tribe of Levi.

Why did God thus honourably distinguish this tribe, to conduct the public worship of the Jews? (Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9.)

They had no inheritance in land (see p. 89.); but who were they especially commanded to consider as their inheritance? and what did God appoint for their support? (Numb. xviii. 20; xxxv. 7.)

Into what three ranks were they divided?—A. *The High-priest, the Priests, and the Levites.*

To what high office were Aaron and his sons consecrated? (Exod. xxviii.; Lev. viii.)

What was the peculiar office of the High-priest?—A. *To exercise a general oversight over the public worship, and to*

perform the most sacred parts of Divine Service (Lev. xvi.).

Shew that, after the death of Moses, the high-priest was the great medium of communication between God and the people. (Numb. xxvii. 21.)

Can you mention any instance of David, or others, thus consulting God? (1 Sam. xxx. 6—8.)—Also of Joshua, or others, acting wrong from omitting thus to consult God? (Josh. ix. 8—14.)

David was at this time an inspired writer of holy Scripture (see when Ps. lvi. lvii. lix. cxlii. &c. were written), yet the Lord spake to him by the High-priest. What may we learn from this?—A. *The honour God puts upon his institutions, and the diligence and reverence with which we should use them.*

The high-priest was distinguished by a peculiarly rich and glorious dress, which he wore on particular occasions: give some account of it, particularly of the breast-plate. (Exod. xxviii. 29; xxxix. 14.)—And the mitre. (Exod. xxviii. 36.)

What was the peculiar office of the Priests?—A. *To make atonement, and to bless the people (Lev. iv. 20; Numb. vi. 23—27).*

[Refer to 1 Chron. xxiii. 13, 2 Chron. xiii. 10, 11; as further descriptive of the Priest's office.]

When not engaged in acts of public worship, how were they employed?—A. *In expounding the law, and in assisting in judging, in civil as well as religious matters.*

Give an instance of any High-priest or Priest punished for neglect of duty. (1 Sam. iv.; Lev. x.)

Give an instance of any punished for usurping their office.—A. *Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 18), and Korah the Levite. (Numb. xvi.)*

Who were the Levites?—A. *All the tribe of Levi not of the family of Aaron.*

Not being permitted to make atonement by offering sacrifice or burning incense, what was their office? (Numb. iii. 6; 1 Chron. xxiii. 28, &c.; 2 Chron. xiii. 10.)

In the time of Moses, into what three families were they divided? (Numb. iii. 17.)

Why were the more sacred parts of the tabernacle committed, in the journey of the Israelites, to the Kohathites?—

(Numb. iii.)—A. *They were most nearly related to the family of Aaron.*

...In the time of David, who re-modelled them, there were 38,090 fit for service. How were these divided? (1 Chron. xxiii. 3—5.)

How many were appointed to praise the Lord on instruments of music?—A. *Four thousand.*

Whom does it appear from Ezra viii. 20, the Levites had as assistants?

[Many of the Psalms appear to have been composed for the use of the Levites in public worship (1 Chron. xvi. 7.) See also Neh. ix. 5, &c. a prayer of the Levites, one of the finest in the Old Testament.]

The tribe of Levi, thus set apart for the public worship of the Jews, and deriving their maintenance from a source which would necessarily fail if the worship and laws of God were neglected (Numb. xviii.), they were deeply interested in their support. Their cities being dispersed through all the tribes, and their families permitted to intermarry with all; being exclusively possessed of the high-priesthood, as well as of all other religious offices; and associated with the high-priest and judge in the supreme court of judicature, and with the elders of every city in the inferior tribunals; they must have acquired such influence and reverence among the people, as was calculated to answer the purpose of their institution; to preserve and consolidate the union of all the other tribes; to instruct the Jews in knowledge, virtue, and piety, "to teach Jacob the judgments, and Israel the law of Jehovah; that they might hear, and fear, and learn to obey the will of their Sovereign and their God." (Deut. xxxiii. 8—10.) See Graves on the Pentateuch.

§ iii. *The place of public worship among the Jews.*

The Tabernacle.

For what purpose especially did God command the Tabernacle to be built? (Exod. xxv. 8: "*sanctuary, that I may dwell,*" &c. See Deut. xii. 5.)

What pattern did Moses follow in making the tabernacle, &c.? (Exod. xxv. 9; Heb. viii. 5.)

What do we learn from the strictness of the Almighty in requiring every thing to be done according to the pattern

shewed on the Mount?—A. *That we are not to follow our own fancies in the service of God.* (See Matt. xv. 9.)

In what respect especially did the Tabernacle differ from the Temple afterwards built? (It was moveable, Ps. lxxviii. 60; 1 Kings viii. 13.)

Into what two parts was it divided; and by what? (Exod. xxvi. 31, &c.; Heb. ix. 6, 7.)

What happened to this at the crucifixion of our Lord? (Luke xxiii. 45.)

By what was the holy place in the tabernacle lighted? (Exod. xl. 4.)

There were many holy things, made of gold, silver, brass, wood: mention some of these in the court of the Tabernacle.

A. *The laver* (Exod. xxx. 18—21); *the altar of burnt-offering, ever burning with fire kindled from heaven* (Exod. xxvii. 1—5; Lev. vi. 13).

Mention some in the Holy Place.—A. *The golden altar of incense* (Exod. xxx. 1, &c.), *the candlestick* (Exod. xxvi. 31; xxvii. 20), *the table of shew-bread* (Exod. xxv. 23—30; Lev. xxiv. 5).

What was the most remarkable thing in the Holy of Holies?—A. *The Ark* (Exod. xxv.).

What was the Ark in an especial manner considered?—A. *As the symbol of the presence of God.*

Describe it. (Exod. xxv. 10—16.)

What did it contain? (Deut. x. 1—5; Heb. ix. 4, 5.)

What was the lid of the Ark called?—A. *The mercy-seat.*

Describe it. (Exod. xxv. 17—21.)

What appeared over it as a symbol of God's presence? (Lev. xvi. 2.)

Give any other illustration of the honour attached to the ark.—A. *In the wilderness* (Numb. x. 33, &c.), *in the passage of Jordan* (Josh. iii. 6), *the taking of Jericho* (Josh. vi. 6), *the destruction of the idol Dagon* (1 Sam. v.).

When, in the time of Eli, disregarding the state of their own hearts, they idolized the ark, what happened to them and to it? (1 Sam. iv; Ps. lxxviii. 59—61.)

Why was Uzzah (2 Sam. vi.) smitten with death?—A. *For not attending to the directions which God had given respecting the ark.* (Numb. iv. 15—20.)

What may we learn from such direction and such punish-

ment? (Ps. lxxxix. 7: "God is greatly, &c. had in reverence," &c. Heb. xii. 28, 29: *godly fear*; "for our God is," &c.)

With what feelings did David look forward to attendance at the tabernacle? (Ps. xliii. 4. xlii. and lxxxiv.)

The Temple.

Who first expressed the desire to build the temple? Was he permitted to build it? relate the circumstances? (2 Sam. vii. 1 Chron. xvii.)

What preparation did he nevertheless make? (1 Chron. xxii.—xxix.)

By whom and at what place was the temple built? (2 Chr. iii. 1.) Turn to 1 Kings vi. 7., and observe what very remarkable circumstance attended the building of it? Shew from the prayer at the dedication the spiritual nature of the service therein to be conducted, and that it was to be not merely a place for the offering of external rites, but a house of prayer. (1 Kings viii. 29.) How was Solomon's prayer answered? (2 Chron. vii.)

In Solomon's letter to Hiram, what does he say was his reason for building the Temple? (2 Chron. ii. 3—6.)

Who gave David the pattern of the Temple? (1 Chron. xxviii. 12.)

With what was the whole house overlaid? (1 Kings vi. 21, *pure gold*.) [Dean Prideaux values the gold with which the Holy of Holies alone was overlaid at £4,320,000.]

How long did it preserve its glory?—A. *Only about thirty-four years.* (1 Kings xiv. 25, 26.)

When and by whom was it burnt? (Jer. lii. 13; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 19; 2 Kings xxv. 9.)

What do we learn from this?—A. *The ruinous effects of sin.*

Was it rebuilt? Give some account of this, as given in the book of Ezra? (Ezra iii. 10, &c.)

Who spent forty-six years in improving it, and what was his character?—A. *Herod the Great.* (John ii. 20. Matt. ii. 16.)

How many people would its courts then contain?—A. 500,000.

What became of this Temple, as foretold by our Lord

(Matt. xxiv. 1, &c.)? and what do we learn from it?—A. *The destruction that awaits every despiser of the Gospel.*

Synagogues.

The word *synagogue* is rarely found in the Old Testament; yet it does not seem possible, as Lightfoot has remarked, that the Jews could keep the Sabbath according to the injunction laid upon them, of having every seventh day a holy meeting, or convocation (Levit. xxiii. 3, 4), if they had not, at all times, their synagogue meetings, or particular congregations; as the plural number used of assemblies, or congregations, doth more than seem to intimate in Ps. xxvi. 12; lxviii. 26, &c. see also Ps. lxxiv. 8.

§ iv. *Seasons of public worship.*

The chief of these were the daily Sacrifices; the weekly Sabbaths; monthly, the Feast of the New Moons; yearly, the Feast of the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the great Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

1. *The Daily Sacrifice, &c.*

What was offered day by day, continually on the brazen altar? (Exod. xxix. 38, &c.)

What was also daily offered on the golden altar? (Exod. xxx. 7.)

How were the people then engaged? (Luke i. 10; Ps. cxli. 2.)

2. *The Weekly Sabbath.*

When was the Sabbath first appointed to man? (Gen. ii.)

Were the Jews reminded of the duty of its observance before the giving of the Fourth Commandment, and on what occasion?—A. *The giving of the manna.* (Exod. xvi.)

What additional sacrifices were offered on that day, morning and evening? (Numb. xxviii. 9, 10.)

Was there any assembly of the people for public worship? (Lev. xxiii. 3.)

From Ps. xcii. (the title of which observe), and from Isa. lviii. 13, 14, shew that it was a spiritual service which was required of them.

What punishment was threatened for its neglect? (Exod. xxxi. 14.)

Is there any instance of its being executed? (Numb. xv. 35.)

In enumerating the sins of the Jews, what do Jeremiah (xvii. 27), Ezekiel (xx. 24), and Nehemiah (xiii. 18), say in a peculiar manner brought upon them God's displeasure?

What account have we of our Lord's observance of the Sabbath? (Mark i. 21; Luke iv. 16, 31; xiii. 10.)

When is the Sabbath-day most blest to us?—A. *When it is most sanctified by us.* (Is. lviii. 13, 14. xl. 31.)

3. The Feast of the New Moon.

From what were the Jewish months originally calculated?—A. *The first appearance of the new moon.*

Give an account of the feast; how it was proclaimed, and what sacrifices were offered. (Numb. x. 10; xxviii. 11; 1 Sam. xx. 5; Ps. lxxxix. 3.)

How was this festival improved by the pious Jews?—A. *By resorting to the Prophets and public teachers for religious instruction.* (2 Kings iv. 23.)

We have an account of Saul observing this solemn festival: but what was the state of his mind at the time? (1 Sam. xx. 5. 24; 2 Tim. iii. 5.)

The months of the Jewish year were Nisan or Abib, Ijar or Zif, Sivan, Thammuz, Ab, Elul, Tizri, Marchesvan, Kisleu or Chisleu, Thebat, Sebat, Adar. The Jews had two principal modes of arranging them, termed the *civil* and *ecclesiastical* years.

The first month of their *civil* year was Tizri, corresponding with part of our September and October; the second month, Marchesvan, &c.; the last, Elul. From this year they reckoned their Jubilee, dated all their contracts, noted the birth of children, and reigns of their kings.

The first month of their *ecclesiastical* year was Nisan or Abib, answering to part of our March and April. From that month they computed their feasts, because at that time was their wonderful deliverance from Egypt effected.

The first chapter of Nehemiah affords an illustration of the importance of a knowledge of the names and order of these months; for instance,

What month did Nehemiah begin to entreat God on behalf of Jerusalem, and how many months passed before his prayer was answered? (Neh. i. 1. ii. 1.)

What does this teach us? (Luke xviii. 1. Lam. iii. 26.)

4, Yearly Feasts.

PASSOVER. When was it instituted, and how was it observed? (Exod. xii.)

What means did God appoint for the preservation of the Israelites from the destruction He inflicted on the first-born of Egypt? (Ex. xii. 7, 13.)

In what respect did the sacrifice then offered differ from all others?—A. *No part was burnt on the altar.*

Referring to Exod. xii. 3, 21, 26, shew what their observance of this feast was eminently calculated to promote?—A. *Family religion.*

What sacrament did our Lord institute at his last celebration of this feast? (Matt. xxvi.)

Mention some passages of the New Testament, which shew the typical reference of this feast to Christ. (John xix. 36, "a bone," &c.; 1 Cor. v. 7.)

PENTECOST. Why is it so called?—A. *In the Greek, Pentecost means fiftieth; and this feast was observed fifty days after that of the Passover.*

Why was it kept?—A. *As a thanksgiving for the beginning of wheat harvest (Exod. xxiii. 16.); and hence called Feast of Harvest, and Day of First Fruits.*

What may we learn from this institution?—A. *The duty of expressing gratitude to God for common mercies.*

What great event (which may be considered as the ingathering of the first fruits of the Christian church) is recorded in Acts ii. to have happened on that day?

FEAST OF TRUMPETS. What was this feast?—A. *The first day of the seventh month the blowing of trumpets was appointed with peculiar sacrifices. (Lev. xxiii. 24, &c.; Numb. xxix. 1.)*

What are supposed to be the two chief designs of this feast?

1. *The seventh month, Tizri, having more holy days in it than any other of the year, might be considered as a sort of Sabbath of months, and was on that account to be begun with an extraordinary sound of trumpets.*

2. *Tizri being the first month of the civil (as Abib was of the ecclesiastical) year, this feast, held on the New-year's-day of that year, would thus remind the Jews of the duty of conducting all the worldly employments of the year in the fear of God and to his glory.*

What may we learn from such an institution?—A. *To begin every year with self-examination, as to the past, and renewed dedication of ourselves to God's service, for the future.*

To what was this feast introductory?—A. *The Day of Atonement.*

DAY OF ATONEMENT. What was the great Day of Atonement?—A. *The tenth day of the seventh month was appointed as a day of public fasting and humiliation, on which the nation were to afflict their souls on account of their sins, and seek atonement for them (Lev. xxiii. 27; xvi. 29; Numb. xxix. 7).*

What did Aaron intend when he laid both his hands on the head of the scape-goat? (Lev. xvi. 21.)

What was that goat said to bear? (Lev. xvi. 22.)

What did the goat offered for a sin offering shadow forth?—A. *The sacrifice of the death of Christ.*

What did the scape-goat represent?—A. *The pardon of sin procured by that sacrifice. (Gal. iii. 13: 2 Cor. v. 21.)*

Into what part of the Tabernacle did the high-priest alone enter on the great day of atonement, and into which even he himself entered on no other occasion?—A. *The Holy of Holies.*

What was shadowed forth by the high-priest's entering the Holy of Holies with incense, and sprinkling the mercy-seat with the blood of the sacrifice? (Heb. ix. 24—28; vii. 25. *Christ entering heaven, to make intercession for us.*)

Refer to Heb. ix. and x., and particularly x. 19, &c.; and shew how much greater are our privileges than those of the Jews, and the use we should make of them.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES. What was the Feast of Tabernacles?—A. *On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, at the end of all their harvest, they began this feast, and dwelt seven days in booths made of the boughs of trees (Deut. xvi. 13).*

Why was it kept?—A. *In memory of their dwelling in booths or tents in the wilderness (Lev. xxiii. 39—44).*

How was it kept? (Numb. xxix. 12, &c. ; Ezra iii. 4 ; Neh. viii. 14—17.)

What may we learn from its institution?—A. *The duty of cherishing a grateful remembrance of God's past mercies to us and our forefathers.*

The last day was the great day of this feast ; what did Jesus on that day? (John vii. 37.)

At what hour did their Sabbaths, and all their feasts begin and end?—A. *The Jews counted their days, and particularly their holy days, from the evening or sun-set, to the next evening* (Gen. i. 5 ; Lev. xxiii. 5, 32).

At what places were the feasts to be kept? (Deut. xvi. 16.)

What remarkable promise was given to those who, in obedience to the command of God, left their homes to attend at the three great annual festivals of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles? (Exod. xxxiv. 24.)

Such a command being given, and being so often obeyed with perfect safety by those who were surrounded by such bitter enemies, of what is it a proof?—A. *Of the miraculous providence by which they were governed, and that Moses wrote and acted under the inspiration of God.*

The Jews in later times had other festivals, not of Divine appointment, of which the two principal were the Feast of Purim, or Lots, and the Feast of the Dedication.

The *Purim* was in commemoration of their deliverance by the providence of God from the utter extermination which Haman had designed, and for which he had actually procured an edict from the Persian king Ahasuerus, then monarch of the world. See Esther.

The Feast of *Dedication* was instituted by Judas Maccabeus, about A.M. 3840, as a grateful memorial of the renewed dedication of the temple to the service of God, after it had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes. Our Lord's attendance on this feast (John x. 22) justifies the observance of religious seasons of human appointment.

Other feasts are alluded to (Zech. viii. 19), but, not being particularly referred to in Scripture, they are not here noticed.

The following remark is well worthy of attention, in connexion with the subjects which have occupied the two preceding chapters.

"If in parts of the Jewish law we should meet with some directions, the utility of which should not be at first sight apparent to us, let us beware of setting up the conclusions of our own reason against the unbounded wisdom of God. A closer consideration of the subject will teach us humbly to acknowledge that all these institutions answered the purpose of exercising the Israelites in faith and obedience; of preserving them a distinct and separate people; and of training them, by a peculiar mode of discipline, wisely suited to their habits, prejudices, and circumstances, for the reception of the New Dispensation under the Messiah;."

CHAPTER VII.

JEWISH SECTS;

WITH NOTICE OF SOME OTHER ORDERS OF MEN
MENTIONED IN SCRIPTURE.

CONTENTS.—§ i. *Scribes, Lawyers, Doctors of the Law.* § ii. *Pharisees.*
§ iii. *Sadducees.* § iv. *Essenes.* § v. *Nazarites.* § vi. *Herodians.*
§ vii. *Galileans.* § viii. *Publicans.* § ix. *Proselytes.* § x. *Samaritans.*

WHILE there was a Divine Oracle in the temple; while there were prophets, that is, men inspired by God to reveal and explain his will, there were no sects among the Jews. But after the spirit of prophecy ceased; after Malachi, the last of the prophets; when the law of God came to be explained by weak and fallible men, then were divisions, then arose sects.

"The whole body of the Jewish nation," remarks Beausobre, "may be divided into two general sects; the Karaites and the Rabbinists. The Karaites are those that adhere to the plain and literal sense of the Holy Scripture, rejecting all manner of tradition as of Divine authority. The Rabbinists, otherwise called the Cabalists, or Talmudists, are those, on the contrary, who own and receive the oral or traditionary law as Divine."

The pernicious maxim which was the chief source of all the Jewish sects, was, that the oral or traditionary law was of Divine origin, as well as the written law of Moses. This traditionary law was supposed to have been handed down

from Moses; that he received it from God while on Mount Sinai; and that by the tradition of the elders, or great national council which he established, it had descended to every succeeding generation¹.

It is a remarkable fact (so little is there any thing new under the sun, even in the forms which error assumes), that the two great sections, Protestants and Roman Catholics, into which the Christian Church may be divided, are formed by the same distinction as that which separated the Jewish church into Karaites and Rabbinites; the rejection of tradition as a rule of faith being, as Bishop Marsh has ably shewn, the vital principle of the Reformation. (Comparative View of Churches of England and Rome.)

§ i. *Scribes, Lawyers, Doctors of the Law,*

Were, in the time of our Lord, only different names for one class of persons. Those who (Luke v. 17.) are called Doctors of the Law, are soon after called Scribes; and he who (Matt. xxii. 35) is called a Lawyer, is called (Mark xii. 28) one of the Scribes. Probably the origin of all sects was from the Scribes, who were not themselves a distinct sect, but, their original employment being that of copying the Law, they gradually became expounders also, and, differing from each other, they drew away disciples after them. It was in order to give weight to their various interpretations of the Law that they attempted to shew, first, that those interpretations were founded on tradition; and then, as the next step, that that tradition was of Divine appointment. It was their gross perversion of the written word of God, by their additions, corruptions, and misinterpretations, which contributed so much to the blindness of the Jews in rejecting their Messiah; whom they had been taught, by these Scribes, sitting in Moses' seat, to expect as a temporal prince; so that when our Saviour asserted his kingdom was not of this world, the people sought to slay him. (John xviii.)

¹ These traditions were, about the second century after Christ, reduced to writing, called the Mishna. Comments were made upon it, which were called Gemara. The Mishna and Gemara, that is, the text and its comment together, made what they call the Talmud.

§ ii. *The Pharisees*

Were the most numerous and important sect of the Jews. They derive their name from a Hebrew word, *Pharash*, which signifies 'separated,' or 'set apart,' because they separated themselves from every other sect, as more holy in their religious observances (Acts xxvi. 5). They believed in the existence of angels and spirits, and in the resurrection of the dead; but the distinguishing feature of their belief was their observance of the tradition of the elders.

Among these traditions the following may be noticed: that of washing their hands before and after meat (Matt. xv. 2; Mark vii. 3), and which they considered to be not merely a religious duty, but its omission as a crime equal to fornication, and punishable by excommunication; that if a son made a formal devotion to sacred purposes, of those goods which he could afford for the relief of a parent, he was then exempt from the duty of succouring his parent; thus encouraging a direct violation of the Fifth Commandment, and in so doing, destroying morality at its very source. The effect produced on their character by thus rendering the word of God of none effect through their traditions, was a disregard of the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy; and an allowance of hypocrisy, covetousness, self-righteousness, and contempt of others (Luke xviii. 9).

They were the bitterest enemies of our Lord, and more hopeless of amendment, he declared, than harlots (Matt. xxi. 31), though they fasted frequently, prayed much, and paid tithes, even of the smallest herbs.

How defective does this prove those motives to be, which, like theirs, regard the praise of man more than the praise of God! how defective that righteousness which, though abounding in outward duties, fails to control the heart! How self-deceived are the self-righteous! (Matt. xxiii.)

§ iii. *The Sadducees*

Denied altogether the authority of tradition. In their anxiety to establish the freedom of the human will, they were gradually led to assert there was no controlling pro-

vidence over the affairs and actions of men. At first maintaining that men ought to serve God out of pure love, and not from hope of reward or fear of punishment, they were led on to assert there was no resurrection to man; and then, by an easy step, that there was neither angel nor spirit (Matt. xxii. 23; Acts xxiii. 8); and such doctrines, accommodated to the strong and depraved passions of the young, affording ample scope for worldly gratification to the opulent, and grateful to those who prided themselves on the sufficiency of human reason, found such among their followers. But the Sadducees were not numerous, though at times filling important posts, as Acts v. 17.

Many, in every age, act, like the Sadducees, upon the principle, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

"The tendency of infidelity to the destruction of social order, is strikingly illustrated by a remark of Josephus on this sect; that the Sadducees, whose tenets were the denial of a moral government and a future state, were distinguished from other sects by their ferocity, and again, for their inhumanity in their judicial capacity." *R. Hall.*

§ iv. *The Essenes*

Differed both from the Pharisees and the Sadducees: from the Pharisees, in their not relying on tradition, or paying any strict regard to the ceremonial law; from the Sadducees, in their belief of a future state, and in their self-denying habits.

Their great error was refining upon Scripture. While holding the word of God in the greatest reverence, they yet neglected its plain and literal meaning, and indulged in allegorical and mystical interpretations, and from their contemplative habits were induced to intrude into things which were not revealed.

They are not mentioned by name in the New Testament; but St. Paul is supposed to have alluded to them, in Col. ii. 18, and also in his Epistle to the Ephesians, and in his First Epistle to Timothy. Though we retire from the world, spiritual pride may follow us.

§ v. *The Nazarites.*

Of these we read both in the Old and New Testament, and they were of two sorts:

1. Those devoted by their parents to God in infancy, or before birth; as Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist.

2. Those who devoted themselves, either for life or a limited time. (Acts xviii. 18; xxi. 24.)

For the law of the Nazarites, see Numbers vi.

§ vi. *The Herodians*

May be considered rather as a political than a religious sect. They were a party strongly attached to the family of Herod; of particularly profligate principles; and, from comparing Mark viii. 15, with Matt. xvi. 6, chiefly Sadducean in their religious tenets. Political expediency was the rule of their religious tenets. Herod being made and continued King by the authority of the Romans, they were, though Jews, easily reconciled to conform to Roman customs in some particulars which were forbidden by the Mosaic Law.

What are they but Herodians in spirit, who attempt to serve God and mammon?

§ vii. *The Galileans*

In one respect, appear in striking contrast to the Herodians, inasmuch as they were distinguished by the constant attempt to shake off the authority of the Romans. They at length infected the whole nation with their turbulent spirit, which ended in its destruction by Titus. Jehovah being in so peculiar a sense their King, they perverted this into the doctrine that tribute was due to God only; and that religious liberty, and the authority of the Divine laws, were to be defended by force of arms.

Such passages as Rom. xiii. 1, &c.; 1 Tim. ii. 1, &c.; 1 Pet. ii. 13, &c. would be peculiarly suitable to preserve Christian converts from such an abuse of Christian liberty.

§ viii. *The Publicans,*

Though generally Jews, were a class of men peculiarly odious to their countrymen. They were tax-gatherers, and collectors of customs due to the Romans; and thus became associated, in the mind of a Jew, with the loss of that which most men hold to be most dear to them, money and liberty; and as the characters of men are formed more by the temptations than the duties of their station, these Publicans, having

the opportunity, by farming the taxes, of practising injustice, were notorious extortioners. This serves to magnify the grace of God in such characters as Zaccheus and Matthew.

§ ix. *The Proselytes*

Were Gentiles who fully embraced the Jewish religion: such were the Ethiopian (Acts viii.), and the Roman centurion (ib. x.): see also Acts ii. 10; vi. 5; xiii. 43.

§ x. *The Samaritans.*

For an account of their origin, see 2 Kings xvii.; from which it will appear that they were partly of Heathen and partly of Jewish extraction. The ivth chapter of the Gospel of St. John will also give a view of their religious state in the time of our Lord.

Governing themselves exclusively by the Five Books of Moses, in which the place, where God would set his name, was not mentioned; and Mount Gerizim, being the spot from which the blessings were pronounced on the entering of the Israelites into Canaan; they, in a spirit of opposition to the Jews, on their return from the Babylonian captivity, fixed, under the direction of Sanballat, their temple on Mount Gerizim: thus illustrating the remark, that error has always some association with truth, and that in religion error is generally the perversion of truth to gratify a worldly mind.

In conclusion it may be remarked, that most of the errors presented to us in this review of the Jewish sects, &c. may be traced to a disregard of "the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."—Sixth Article of the Church of England.

[Prayer being the great preservative from error, the following passages, suggesting petitions for Divine teaching, may properly form the close of this chapter: Col. i. 9, 10; Eph. i. 17, &c.; 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2; Ps. cxix.]

N. B. The substance of this chapter may be easily reduced to questions for the examination of the young.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

THE object of this chapter is not to enter into any detailed account of the Books of the Bible, yet occasionally to dwell a little more on the contents of one book than on those of another, in order to illustrate the views already taken of the Bible in the preceding chapters. The three principal subjects on which (as has been already hinted, page 34) the Bible informs us, are,—*the character of God, the character and condition of man, and the great work of man's redemption*; and to these our attention should be chiefly directed, with a view to a knowledge of our duty, our character, and the foundation of our hopes for eternity. Short illustrations, reminding the reader of these and other topics, will therefore be occasionally made; especially in the Old Testament, where there is perhaps the greater danger of these subjects being overlooked. The Book of Genesis has been particularly selected as suggesting remarks, which the Scripture reader himself may so apply to the other books.

Short Account of the Books of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament contains thirty-nine books, which may be thus divided into four parts, namely, the Pentateuch, the Historical Books, the Poetical Books, and the Prophets. It has been said, page 48, that in the Old Testament is *the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour*. In noticing the contents of each book, it will be the leading object to illustrate this.

§ 1.—THE PENTATEUCH, OR LAW.

The *Pentateuch* is so called from a Greek word signifying five books, and is the title given to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These were written by Moses in one continued work, and still remain in that form in the public copies now read in the Synagogues.

These books were also called the *Law*, or the *Law of Moses*, because throughout the four last of them are interspersed the laws which God, through Moses, appointed for

the regulation of the civil government and religion of the Israelites.

The Pentateuch presents us with a compendious history of the world, from the Creation to the death of Moses, a period of about 2553 years. "It is a wide description gradually contracted : an account of one nation, preceded by a general sketch of the first state of mankind."

On the Book of GENESIS.

This book, from the first page of which it has been truly said that a child may learn more in one hour than all the philosophers in the world learnt without it in one thousand years, has been properly named Genesis. Genesis means *generation*, or *origin* : and here, emphatically, we have an account of the origin of all things ; that is, so far as it concerns us to know ; the origin of the world and of man ; but especially of moral evil among men, and of the remedy which God in his infinite love has provided against it. Indeed, as has been already hinted, page 35, an observation of the topics of this book, and of the manner in which they are here treated, is a clue to the design of the whole Bible. For instance :

Though this book is the foundation of all history, of all that we know of the origin of nations, it may be observed, that, in the fifty chapters of which it consists, the general history of mankind before the Flood, referring to a period of 1656 years, and including the account of the creation of the world, occupies only *seven* chapters : the general history of mankind after the Flood, referring to a period of 427 years, occupies only *four* chapters ; and, in fact, a very small portion of these eleven chapters refers to the general history of mankind, whilst the particular history of Abraham and his descendants, consisting principally of the details of the life of a few individuals, and referring to a period of only 286 years, occupies *thirty-nine* chapters.

The reason is, that the Bible is not merely a history of man, a moral history of man, but emphatically a *history of the Church of God*, of that Church of which Christ is the Head (Eph. i. 22). And hence it is that, before the Flood, Seth and his descendants, particularly Noah, and after the Flood, Shem and his descendants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, occupy the chief place in the history. They constituted

the Church of God: in their line was *Messiah* to come. Through the medium of the history of this Church, her wanderings and warfare in the wilderness of this world, are we principally taught those subjects of deepest importance to us, namely, just views of God and of our nature, and how we may attain eternal salvation.

The book of Genesis contains the history of about 2369 years, embracing the period from the creation, to the death of Joseph.

Bishop Blomfield (Lent Lectures on St. John's Gospel) suggests the following important hint. After having read through a book of Scripture, and thus obtained a general knowledge of its contents, he recommends that it should be read through again, with reference to some *one* subject. Many illustrations of one subject deepen its impression on the mind. Take, for instance, the general notices of the instruction to be obtained from this book concerning God.

The Nature of God.

It has been remarked, page 40, that God revealed his nature gradually; and in addition to the references there made to Genesis, tracing the early dawn of the doctrine of the Trinity, may be added the following.

The Attributes of God.

Instances of his *justice*. Gen. iii. the punishment of the sin of Adam: iv. of Cain: vi. the Flood: xix. the cities of the plain, and of Lot's wife: as also the evils brought on Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his children, when they sinned.

Instances of God's *mercy and grace*. Chap. iii. 15, in the promise of a Saviour, *even before* the sentence on man was pronounced: iv. expostulating with Cain: vi. so long delaying the Flood.

"How loth is God to strike, that threatens so long! He that delights in revenge surprises his adversary; whereas he that gives long warning, desires to be prevented."—*Bp. Hall*.

Thus one reason why Abraham and his descendants (xv. 16.) were not permitted to possess Canaan for 400 years, was, that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.

Instances may also be collected of

God's readiness to hear prayer.

See xx. 17. the prayer of Abraham for Abimelech : and xviii. for Sodom : xxiv. 12, that of Eleazar for Abraham : xix. 21, Lot's prayer : xxi. 17, Ishmael's prayer.

God's faithfulness to his promises.

See viii. 22, "seed time, harvest," &c. Compare xxviii. 15, with xlviii. 15. But particularly the faithfulness of God is seen in the provision made for the fulfilment of his great promise, iii. 15. Trace this, on His raising up Seth after Abel, iv. 25 ; and again in Enos, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. : particularly observing how God most helped his Church when they most needed help. In this period of the history of the Church, the whole plan of redemption seems frequently to have depended upon a single life ; yet, after 4000 years of peril, in the fulness of time, how was the promise fulfilled, in a manner which it had not entered into the heart of man to conceive !

Observe

The honour which God puts upon his people.

This is shewn by His blessing others for their sake. As : xviii. 32 ; for ten righteous He would have spared Sodom. Again, xix. 21, God spared Zoar even for Lot's sake, and Sodom itself while Lot was in it. And xxx. 27, selfish Laban was blest for Jacob's sake ; xxxix. 5, Potiphar for Joseph's sake.

Remark, too, how

God tries the faith of his people.

Trace this in Noah ; Abraham (xxi. 5.) who had received the promise of a son twenty-five years before Isaac was born. Notice how Abraham's other sons abound in children, while Isaac, in whom his seed is to be as the stars of heaven for multitude, goes childless for twenty years after his marriage ; and that a marriage on which the Divine blessing had been so remarkably sought and obtained. Consider Esau's posterity : at first much more numerous and distinguished among men than Jacob's, (xxxvi. 15.)

Observe also

The sovereignty of God.

That is called the sovereignty of God when the reasons of his conduct are hid from us. Thus Abel slain for righteousness' sake; Enoch translated;—sparing Zoar, destroying Lot's wife;—destroyed in the plain, when she had escaped from the city;—the wife perishes, the infamous daughters preserved:—Jacob preferred before Esau, and this determined before they were born (Rom. ix. 11).

Observe also the *practical use which God would have us make of the consideration of his attributes as motives to duty.* xvii. 1. "I am the Almighty," &c. This was to strengthen Abraham's faith under the delay of God's promise of Isaac, and to check him from adopting sinful expedients to hasten it.

Motives.

It is very important to observe the various motives urged in Scripture to lead us to obedience. Thus on Adam, even in Paradise, an appeal is made to his fears as well as his hopes (ii. 17). In the day, &c.; surely die. So Noah moved with fear, &c. Heb. xi. Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ, but on him the consideration of temporal as well as eternal good was urged. (Gen. xiii. 14.) Nor are such motives limited to the Old Testament, see 1 Pet. iii. 10), though the great constraining motive is the love of Christ (1 Pet. i. 8).

The leading subject of the Old Testament being the *preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the Book of Genesis may be read with this view. Collect the prophecies respecting Christ, iii. 15.; xii. 3, &c.

Notice the types, particularly that of sacrifice. iv. 4, Abel; viii. 20, Noah.

Observe that the promise to Noah follows the acceptance of the burnt offering; the covenant with Abraham is also with sacrifice, (xv. 9.)

xxii.: Abraham offering up Isaac. As the sacrifice of Abel and its circumstances particularly shadowed the evil of sin; so that of Isaac shadowed forth the love of God as the means of its removal (John iii. 16; Heb. xi. 17; Rom. viii. 32). See also xxvi. 25, Isaac; and xxxi. 54, Jacob's use of sacrifice.

As soon as prophecy declared that the sons of Jacob

should become heads of tribes, it pointed out the particular tribe from which the Messiah should come, not either of Jacob's favourite sons Joseph or Benjamin, but Judah, (xlix. 10.), and he the fourth in descent. (see 2 Pet. i. 21.)

The typical nature of the Old Testament history may also be noticed. xiv.: Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedec. By this St. Paul shows that the Mosaic dispensation was intended to be subservient to that of the Gospel (Heb. vii.) St. Paul also shews (Rom. ix. 11, &c.) that the preference given to Isaac before Ishmael, and Jacob before Esau, prefigured the rejection of the Jews and the call of the Gentiles: thus, as Lowth remarks, shewing that the eminent persons of foregoing ages, and the remarkable passages of their lives, did bear some resemblance or representation of Him that was to come.

In the selection of facts the same subject is kept in view. Thus Cain and his descendants, Ishmael and his descendants, are very soon unnoticed. "When a man leaves God and his people, the sacred historian leaves him."

Temptation.

Temptation is an enticement to transgress the law of God from some supposed advantage to be obtained or evil avoided. Observe the nature of those enticements which prevailed with Eve (Gen. iii. 6.); the advantage she expected; how her fears were removed (verse 4.) Abraham (Gen. xii. 12); the evil he feared. Eve was tempted by the devil, Adam by his wife, Sarah by her husband (xii. 13), Jacob by his mother (Gen. xxvii.)

The Liability of Men to sin.

This may be illustrated by the failings of God's people, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, &c. Noah, after such a display of his faith in building the ark, &c. Abraham, after leaving his country, &c.; and twice offending in the same way. Isaac, after his surrender of himself as a sacrifice, (Gen. xxii.) committing the very sin which brought shame on his father (Gen. xxvi. 7). Jacob, after his vow at Beth-el, needing, many years after, to be reminded of that vow (Gen. xxxv. 1); and in the decline of a life so distinguished by God's care, saying, "All these things are against me" (Gen. xlii. 36), at the very moment when Joseph was in fact the governor of Egypt.

The Folly and Deceit of Sin.

The folly in Adam, Eve, and Cain, imagining they could hide themselves or their conduct from God! (Gen. iii. iv.)

What advantage did Adam and Eve, Cain, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph's brethren, gain by their deceit? Were they not deceived? particularly Jacob by Laban and his own children. Compare xxvii. 9., kid, &c. with xxxvii. 81., kid.

The devil in tempting Eve, the builders of Babel, and Joseph's brethren, thought to defeat God's purpose; but did they?

The Progress of Sin

May be noticed in Cain (Gen. iv. 8); what his anger ended in.

The resentment of Esau soon kindled into the intention to murder (Gen. xxvii. 41, with Rom. iii. 15, "their feet are swift to shed," &c.) Also the envy of Joseph's brethren; first shewn in not speaking peaceably to him; ending in the determination to murder him (Gen. xxxvii. 4. 18).

Cruelty to their brother needed a lie to hide it from their father; and no doubt Jacob went much further in lying than he intended, when he first yielded to his mother's entreaty to deceive his father (xxvii. 20).

"Chap. xxxiv. shews how one sin leads to another, and, like flames of fire, spread desolation in every direction. Dissipation leads to seduction, seduction produces wrath, wrath thirsts for revenge, the thirst of revenge has recourse to treachery, treachery issues in murder, and murder is followed by lawless depredation." (*Fuller on Genesis.*)

The Evil of Sin.

Observe not only the suffering which sin brings on those who first commit it, but the suffering and sin in which they involve others by it.

Abraham's equivocation; involving his wife in sin, bringing plagues on Pharaoh and Abimelech, exposing Pharaoh and Abimelech to temptation.

The strife between the servants of Abraham and Lot

(Gen. xiii.) occasioned the separation of their masters ; and from that time Lot went wrong.

Lot's sin in living at Sodom involved his family in those strong temptations by which they were corrupted, and perished. (Gen. xiii. 10.) Jacob's sin provoked his brother to sin. (Gen. xxvii.)

These illustrations from Genesis may be compared with illustrations taken from other parts of Scripture. Thus, the sin of the Amalekites (Exod. xvii. 8, 14.) brought destruction upon them more than 400 years after. (1 Sam. xv.) " His blood be on us and our children," said the Jews at the crucifixion of Christ ; and now for more than 1700 years has that blood been required at their hands.

But the most awful fact illustrative of the evil of sin is, that Adam's sin, the first sin of the first man, depraved mankind and brought them under condemnation to eternal wrath. (Rom. v. ; Eph. ii.)

As illustrating what was said (p. 16), that the great evil of sin is, that it dishonours God, " it is observable that the reason given (Gen. ix. 6) for the punishment of the murderer with death, is taken from the affront which he offers to God, not from the injury he does to man."

In the same light the sin of Adam is to be viewed. The act might in itself seem trifling, but by breaking one command he violated the authority on which all rest (James ii. 10). " How awful the thought, that the same God who condemned Adam for one transgression, regards every sin of which we are guilty with the same abhorrence, and that our iniquities are more in number than the hairs of our head !"

It was said (p. 35) that one purpose for which God gave us the Bible was to shew us the necessity of an atonement for sin. If such be the evil of sin, what but the blood of Christ can cleanse from sin ? who but the Holy Spirit can deliver from its power ?

Riches, Beauty, Reputation, &c.

As all our estimates of right and wrong, good and evil, must be derived from the word of God, we may prove by the word of God the value of things highly esteemed among men. For instance :

The riches of Abraham and Lot occasioned their separa-

tion (xiii. 7); Isaac's wells, strife (xxvi. 20); Sodom's wealth, the occasion of her corruption and destruction (xix.; see Mark x. 23).

The beauty of the descendants of Cain was the occasion of the corruption of the church, and the ruin of mankind (vi.); Sarah's beauty, was Abraham's snare (xii.); Rebekah's was Isaac's (xxvi. 7). Rachel was beautiful, but envious, and hence unhappy, and rendering all around her so.

Genesis contains a sketch of the history of mankind for 2369 years; but what was most in repute among them? sin, deeds of violence, licentiousness, idolatry, &c. The people of God are few in number, and little thought of.

Was it so in the time of Moses, the Prophets, and in the time of our Lord? Is it then safe to adopt the law of fashion, the opinions and rules by which the world govern themselves, and to judge of right and wrong by their praise or censure? (1 John ii. 15.)

The value of God's favour.

Let the attention be constantly directed to this subject, and to the means by which it may be attained.

It was the favour of God which constituted the happiness of Paradise, delivered Enoch from death, Noah from the flood, Lot from the fiery tempest. It was Abraham's shield and reward; it gave Isaac peace and honour in the presence of his enemies; delivered Jacob from all evil; comforted Joseph in slavery and in prison, and raised him above the greater trials of worldly prosperity, endured through a period of eighty years (l. 24—26).

The favour of God is but little thought of; men take very little pains to obtain it; but on a review of the history of the world, what has survived the wreck of time, but the Bible and the Church, God's word and God's people?

The nature of Human Life.

The young enter into life expecting great things from the world. Observe, then, (iv. 1) Eve's expectation from Cain, how disappointed; she thought she had gotten a man, the Lord, the promised Messiah, and he proved a murderer. Isaac's anxiety for a family, and the little comfort he had even from his favourite son (xxvi. 35). See Rachel's

wish (xxx. 1), and Rachel's death (xxxv. 16). And let it check inordinate desires.

Chap. xxxvii. 13 and 28, also shews how little we know what a day may bring forth : xxxvii. 31, the coat of many colours dipped in blood.

Attend to Jacob's testimony (xlvii. 9), "Few and evil," &c., and let us thank God, that, as "we through our sins have made our days evil, He has in mercy made them few. It is well for us that a life of sin and sorrow is not immortal." (See Heb. xi. 16.)

Affliction.

We naturally shun affliction. But, now that man is a sinner, a life of labour and sorrow has become a restraint on sin, converting the curse into a blessing. The Patriarchs (particularly Jacob and Joseph's brethren,) were greatly benefited by affliction, and Joseph fitted for greater usefulness ! Affliction is the school of wisdom ; and the Book of Genesis thus presents it to us ; restraining men's passions, exercising their graces, weaning them from the world, and wonderfully displaying the glory of God's providence.

Counterfeit Virtues.

Every virtue has its counterfeit. It is desirable to be wise, but not as Eve sought wisdom (Gen. iii.). Husbands should love their wives, but not as Adam did, in hearkening to Eve urging him to sin. Wives should obey their husbands, but not as Sarah did Abraham, in consenting to tell a lie (Gen. xii.) Servants should take great care of their masters' property, but not as Abraham and Lot's herdsmen, to quarrel about it (Gen. xiii.) Children should obey their parents (Col. iii. 20), but not as Jacob did Rebekah (Gen. xxvii.) Parents should desire to bless their children, but not as Isaac sought to bless Esau. We should desire to forward the accomplishment of God's declared will, but not as Rebekah did. Not to provide for those of our own household, is to deny the faith and be worse than an infidel, but we are not so to provide for them as Lot did for his, making wealth the object of our chief pursuit.

We ought to worship God, but not as Cain did, disregarding God's *appointed* way. Self-righteous Cain felt no need of a Saviour. He feared God, but it was not from right

principles. The Bible declares the fear of the Lord to be the beginning of wisdom ; and that where this principle is wanting, all is wrong. Hence " the plowing of the wicked is sin " (Prov. xxi. 4), and his very prayers an abomination.

Thus, however generous Esau might be (Gen. xxxiii. 9), he was profane Esau still. We cannot give that praise to his disinterestedness which we give to Abraham's (Gen. xiv. 22), because it did not proceed, as Abraham's did, from religious principle.

Particular Virtues or Vices.

It may be desirable, after having read a book of Scripture, for a time to limit the attention to the illustration it affords of any one virtue or vice, observing its development under different circumstances.

Thus the different circumstances under which faith was shewn in Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, &c. may be compared. So of particular vices, as lying in Cain, Abraham, Jacob, &c. ; envy, in Cain, Rachel, Joseph's brethren ; covetousness, in Lot, Laban, &c. : while, again, the pride of the Babel builders may be compared with some illustration from another part of Scripture, as Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 30).

Relative Duties.

Having read through a book of Scripture, compare those mentioned in it, filling the same relations, stations, &c. ; husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers, servants, &c. ; rich, poor, kings, priests, &c. For instance : Abraham was uncle to Lot, and Laban was uncle to Jacob ; compare Abraham's conduct to Lot, with Laban's to Jacob.

Eliezer was a servant in Abraham's house ; Jacob, in Laban's (see Gen. xxxi. 38—41) ; Joseph, in Potiphar's (see Gen. xxxix. 1—6). Gen. xiii. 7 gives an account of quarrelsome servants.

These servants may be compared with other servants ; as, David (1 Sam. xviii. 5) ; Jeroboam (1 Kings xi. 28) ; Obadiah (1 Kings xviii. 3) ; Naaman's maid and servants (2 Kings v. 2, 3, 13) ; the centurion's servants (Luke vii. 8 ; Acts x. 7) ; Gehazi, a deceitful and dishonest servant (2 Kings v. 20—27) ; Onesimus (Philemon). See also Job xix. 15, 16. And these examples may be compared with those passages where the duties of those relations,

stations, &c., are enforced by precept, as Eph. v. vi. ; Col. iii. 4. ; Titus ii. ; 1 Peter ii. iii.

The importance of presenting the same truths in different ways.

These are some of the many topics which may be suggested to prompt the reader's mind, by affording hints which he may carry further.

In reply to the objection that such topics involve considerable repetition of the same subject, it may be said, in the words of Locke, "that repetition helps much to the fixing of any ideas in the memory ; and those especially *that are conveyed into the mind by more ways than one*, fix themselves best in the memory, and remain clearest and longest there."

This art of presenting the same truths in different ways to the mind of those whom we would instruct, is of great importance to cultivate ; and we have high authority for doing so, as our Lord's parables, &c. often shew that this was one mode of his teaching (Matt. xiii. ; Luke xv.).

On the Book of Exodus.

The title of this book is peculiarly appropriate. Exodus means "departure ;" and this book contains the account of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt ; an event which is the foundation upon which their whole history as a nation rests, and which is more frequently referred to in their subsequent history than any other event.

The two great subjects of this book are, the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and God's covenant with them in the wilderness. In reference to which events this book may be thus divided.

1. Their oppressed state in Egypt after the death of Joseph (chap. i).

2. The birth of Moses their deliverer, and preparation for his great office (ii.—vi).

3. Their miraculous deliverance, and destruction of their enemies (vii.—xiv).

4. Their entrance into the Wilderness, and miraculous provision made for their guidance and support (xv.—xviii).

5. Their national covenant with God, made, broken, renewed (xix.—xxxiv).

6. The tabernacle built, and God's solemn possession of it (xxxv.—xl).

Thus were they formed as a distinct people under Jehovah as their king (see xix. 4—6).

Exodus comprehends a period of about 145 years, from the death of Joseph to the erection of the Tabernacle.

Of three subjects on which it is the principal intention of the Bible to inform us—namely, the character of God, the character of man, and the great work of man's redemption—this book affords abundant illustration. For instance: in reference to the character of God, a wonderful view of God's providence is shewn, in leading Pharaoh's daughter to bring up him who should be the deliverer of Israel from Pharaoh's oppression: the long-suffering of God to Pharaoh is no less observable; while in Pharaoh and the Israelites is seen the depravity of man by nature, and in Moses, the change which Divine grace produces on man. But the limits of this little work will only allow the notice of that which is the peculiar feature of the Old Testament (p. 48); namely, the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour.

Illustrations from Exodus of the preparation made in the Old Testament for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour.

1. *Object of Mosaic dispensation to shew man's need of a Saviour.*—This is remarkably shewn in the miracles of Moses so frequently inflicting death as the punishment of sin, and in this respect so strikingly contrasted with the miracles of our Lord, which were all miracles of mercy (John i. 17). In the manner of giving of the Law from Mount Sinai, the same object appears (chap. xix. 16; xx. 18, with Heb. xii. 18). "If the Law was thus given, how shall it be required? O God, how powerful art thou to inflict vengeance upon sinners, who didst thus forbid sin; and if thou wert so terrible a lawgiver, what a judge shalt thou appear!" *Bp. Hall.*

Man's need of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (which was one great object of the Saviour's coming) is in a striking manner illustrated by the little effect produced by the most

stupendous miracles of mercy and judgment, in disposing either Pharaoh or the Israelites to love God.

2. *Appearances of the Angel of Jehovah.*—In this book of Exodus the same Angel, who had been through Jacob's life his deliverer from all evil (Gen. xlviii. 15, &c.), appears as the great Redeemer of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Notice (chap. iii. 2—15) the Angel of Jehovah speaks of himself as the God of Abraham, as "I am that I am." To the same person is attributed, in the New Testament, the giving of the law to the Israelites (Acts vii. 38, with Exod. xix. 19, 20; xx. 1). He is also described as conducting them through the wilderness (xxiii. 20, 21); appearing also afterwards to Joshua (Josh. v. 15; vi. 2), to give him possession of Canaan, requiring the same act of homage from him as he had from Moses (Exod. iii.).

In these appearances may be traced the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour; these temporal deliverances shadowing forth that which was spiritual.

3. *Types.*—It is a remarkable circumstance that Christ our passover was sacrificed for us, and our deliverance from the bondage of sin completed, in the same month, and on the same day of the month, that the Israelites were delivered from the bondage of Egypt. The Israelites went out of Egypt, and Christ was put to death, on the fifteenth day of the month Nisan. Man did not intend this coincidence (compare Matt. xxvi. 5, with Acts xiii. 27); but here is evidently an adaptation by God of this part of the history of his chosen people to the times of the Gospel. So, also, their passing from Egypt through the Red Sea, the Wilderness, and Jordan, to the Promised Land, is a lively representation of a Christian's pilgrimage through life to that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

The great doctrine of Revelation which was to be fully unfolded in the New Testament, was the mediation of Christ. The preparation made for this doctrine is seen in the various intercessions of Moses, by which the wrath of God was stopped (chap. xv. 25; xvii. 12; xxxii. 11); but particularly by the mediation of Moses as a lawgiver. Moses's ratifying the covenant made between God and the Israelites, by the sprinkling of blood (chap. xxiv. 8), reminded them of their unfitness as sinners to enter into any covenant with

God, except through an appointed atonement: and thus this act was eminently typical of the new covenant ratified by the blood of Christ (Matt. xxvi. 28; Heb. ix. 19—22); while in the sins committed by Moses is seen that he was but a type, his mediation and atonement possessing no merit in themselves.

The Paschal lamb (compare xii. 46 [called ver. 27 the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover], with John xix. 36; 1 Cor. v. 7, 8), particularly observing how the blood of the victim was made the means of preservation from the wrath of God; and how, by partaking of its flesh, they were strengthened for their journey.

The Manna (xvi. 15, with 1 Cor. x. 3; John vi. 31, 49, 58).

The Smitten Rock (xvii. 6, with 1 Cor. x. 4; John vii. 37).

The Mercy Seat (xxv. 17—22, with Rom. iii. 25; Heb. iv. 16).

The Tabernacle, built according to an exact pattern given by God (xxv. 9, 40; xl. 34, with John i. 14), and the solemn possession God took of it, filling it with his glory, reminding us of the Word made flesh and tabernacling among us (John ii. 19, 21; Col. ii. 9).

The Daily Sacrifice and burning of incense, shadowing forth the sacrifice and intercession of Christ (Rev. viii. 3; Luke i. 10, with Exod. xxix. 42; xxx. 7).

As to the use we may make of these types, let us remember, that under temptation we have a great Mediator; under a sense of sin, we are called to behold the very Paschal Lamb "who was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world." Let us feed on the doctrine of Christ, as heavenly manna, the bread of life; let us seek the refreshing and sanctifying influences of his Holy Spirit, that living water which he hath promised. In his name, let us fear not to come boldly to a mercy-seat; and let our heart be filled with love at his wonderful condescension in having tabernacled in our nature, praying that the same mind may be in us which was in him (Phil. ii.). A day did not pass, but the whole congregation were reminded of their constant need of an atoning sacrifice, and invited by faith to partake of its blessing. Let this teach us to live a life of faith in Christ our Saviour; esteeming, as Moses did,

the reproach of Christ greater riches than any thing that this world can give (Heb. xi.).

This is to apply the types to their right use, and shews how the Jewish and Christian dispensations mutually illustrate and confirm each other; "the sacrifices, &c. of the Law preparing for the atonement of Christ; and that atonement reflecting a dignity and glory upon them, by manifesting their nature and completing their design."

On the Book of LEVITICUS.

The last book (Exodus) closed with God's taking solemn possession of the Tabernacle: the subject of this book is the services enjoined there; or, in other words, the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion. The tribe of Levi, as has been already noticed (page 122), were set apart to instruct the people in the knowledge of these rites, and to conduct the religious worship of the Jews; and this book is hence called Leviticus, or the Book of the Levites, because it contains more especially that which would enable them to discharge those duties.

The rites and ceremonies contained in this book are reducible to the three following heads.

1. *Sacrifices.* All of which had a typical reference to Christ, and especially to his atonement.

2. *Purifications* from legal uncleanness. These represented the necessity of inward purity of heart, and man's need of the Holy Spirit to purify the soul.

3. *Various solemn Festivals*, calculated to unite their tribes as one nation; to keep them separated from other nations; to promote among them piety; and prefigure to them the blessings of the Gospel. (See pages 127—132.)

This book records the transactions of but one month; but the facts it mentions are peculiarly appropriate to its subject. Its great subject is the public worship of God, by which especially his great name was to be honoured. The facts are, the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, and the punishment of Nadab and Abihu, and of the blasphemers. The first instructs us in the importance God attaches to his worship; the two last are awful warnings of the danger of irreverence in any thing connected with His name and service. "Therefore he strikes some,

that he may warn all." The prophecies contained in chapter xxvi. have the same bearing; shewing the awful consequences which would follow upon their neglect of God.

Aaron's resignation is a touching example of the influence of grace (x. 3). "There is no greater proof of grace than to smart patiently, and humbly and contentedly to rest the heart on the justice and wisdom of God's proceeding." Compare Micah vii. 9, with Exod. xxxii. 2.

In Nadab and Abihu is also seen the tendency of the heart of man to sin. Previously, how honoured of God (Exod. xxiv. 9); just consecrated to his service; a miracle attending the consecration (chap. ix. 24). Their crime consisted in performing their duty in an irregular manner: using common fire, not fire lighted from the sacred fire on the altar. It should seem they had been betrayed into this act of presumption, by intemperance at the feast upon the peace offering (see x. 9), the injunction immediately following their death.

Preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

Types.—The Levitical law is, throughout, a shadow of good things to come (Col. ii. 16, 17; Heb. x. 1). But particularly observe the services on the great Day of Atonement (chap. xvi.), as explained Heb. ix. See page 130.

"God came to dwell among them, and he dwelt upon a mercy-seat, and all their worship was directed thither; but they were not to approach even the mercy-seat, but through the mediation of an high-priest; nor must the high-priest himself come into the holy place, where God was supposed to have his special residence, without the blood of sacrifices; which blood is expressly declared to be for an atonement, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions and their sins (chap. xvi. 16; see also xvii. 11. It is the blood which maketh atonement, &c. with Heb. x. 4, &c.)"

On the Book of NUMBERS.

So called because it contains an account of the numberings of the people of Israel; the first numbering in the beginning of the second year after their departure out of

Egypt; the second numbering at the plains of Moab, at the conclusion of their journey in the wilderness. This book comprehends a period of about thirty-eight years; but most of the events related in it happened in the first and last of those years. The date of the facts recorded in the middle of the book cannot be precisely ascertained. The history presents us with an account of the consecration of the tabernacle, and of the Levites; the journeys and encampments of the Israelites, particularly marked by their murmurings and rebellions. Various laws are repeated, and some new ones added. An enumeration is also given of the twelve tribes, and directions for the division of the land of Canaan, of which they were about to take possession.

This book abounds with the most signal displays of God's judgments against sin. Not only against the heathen, as Sihon and Og, and the Midianites (xxxix), but against his chosen people; fire (xi. 1—3), pestilence (xi. 4—35), the very earth both their executioner and their grave, and the plague sweeping them like grass before the scythe (xvi. xxv. with Psalm xc. 6): all of that generation, of twenty years old and upwards, who left Egypt, doomed to perish in the wilderness for their iniquity, none exempted but Caleb and Joshua (xiv. 29). In Micah vi. 4, we read of God saying, "I sent Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam, before them:" but if they sinned they were punished. In this book we read of Miriam struck with leprosy for her sin. Aaron, the saint of the Lord (Ps. cvi. 16), and even Moses, than whom there arose not a greater prophet, excluded from the promised land for having once spoken unadvisedly with their lips (xx. 12). Yet this book no less wonderfully displays the faithfulness of God to his promise to Abraham, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven; for, on the second numbering, at the close of their journey, their numbers are scarcely diminished, as compared with their numbers when they went into the wilderness. Jacob's family entered Egypt seventy souls (Gen. xlv. 27). Though grievously afflicted in Egypt, and after forty years' wandering in the wilderness, they leave that wilderness amounting to more than two millions.

The Psalms lxxxviii. cv. cvi. cxxxvi., and 1 Cor. x., suggest much practical improvement from the events of this book.

Illustrations from the Book of Numbers of the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour (see page 48).

The *facts* of this history, particularly the awful punishments inflicted against sin, shew man's need of a Saviour; while the repeated proofs which are given of man's tendency to sin shew his need of the office of the Holy Spirit to dispose and enable him to overcome it.

Typical Persons.—The intercessions of Moses at Taberah (xi. 3), at Hazeroth for Miriam (xii. 13), at Kadesh-barnea (xiv. 19); also Aaron's atonement (xvi. 46), are very observable.

Typical things.—The circumstances of the Israelites' cure by the brazen serpent (chap. xxi., with John iii. 14), form a very illustrious type of Christ, and particularly of his death upon the cross, by whom we are redeemed from the sting of death, and the power of the devil.

Prophecy.—Balaam's prophecy of the Star to come out of Jacob (chap. xxiv. 17—19), points to the Bright and Morning Star (Matt. ii. 2; Luke i. 78; Rev. xxii. 16), which through the tender mercy of our God should visit us (Jesus), who must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet (chap. xxiv. 17—19, with 1 Cor. xv. 25).

Particular opposers of God's church, as the Moabites, and Edomites, are, in the language of prophecy, put for the adversaries of the Lord in general; and Israel represents the true church of God.

On the Book of DEUTERONOMY.

Deuteronomy means the "law repeated;" and this fifth and last book of the Pentateuch is so called because it contains a repetition of the Law, which was a second time delivered by Moses, with some omissions, additions, and explanations. The omissions are chiefly such as relate to the duties of the priests and Levites. The additions are such as were peculiarly adapted to their state, as just entering on the promised land. The explanations tend to illustrate the holiness of heart required by the Mosaic law. As the book of Leviticus would instruct them in the forms of their worship, so may this book be considered as instructing them as to the spirit in which to perform it. For in-

stance, it explains the spiritual intention of circumcision (x. 16), that it had reference to the purifying of the heart from sin; and (compared with xxx. 6.) taught them, while referring all holiness to God's grace, to look for that grace in the diligent use of every means appointed by God for imparting it. (Compare chap. x. 16. and xxx. 6, with Phil. ii. 12, 13.) Of this book the following remarkable particulars may be noticed.

1. It was (with the obvious exception of the last chapter) not only written but spoken by Moses, to all Israel, immediately before his death. The peculiar propriety of so solemn an address appears from recollecting that the generation who had originally heard the Law as delivered from Mount Sinai, with the exception of those under twenty years of age, had now perished in the wilderness.

2. The general outlines of it, if not the whole book, were to be written upon stones, plastered, and set up on their entering the promised land (xxvii. 2, 3);—a solemn memento of the terms on which alone they should retain possession of it.

3. The king (how far into futurity was Moses permitted to look!) was to write a copy of it with his own hand, and to read therein all the days of his life (xvii. 18, 19).

4. It was to be read publicly by the priests every seventh year, at the Feast of Tabernacles, in the hearing of all Israel (xxx. 1—16).

5. It was by a reference to this book our blessed Saviour defeated the temptations of Satan (Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10; with chaps. viii. 3; vi. 16, 13).

6. Observe the very important use to be made of the prophetic ode of Moses (chap. xxxii., with xxxi. 19, 21)—a portion of Scripture remarkably displaying the character of God. Also the prophecies uttered in this book concerning the Jewish nation; illustrating the moral use of prophecy—that is, the use which God made of presenting the future before men in order to influence aright their present conduct. Thus we see here foretold the Israelites' success on obedience (xi. 23—29; xxx. 9); God's blessing on their tribes (xxxiii.); their apostasy and corruption (xxx. 27—29); punishments, dispersions, desolations (iv. 25—30; vii. 20; xxviii—xxxiii); the idolatry and cap-
tivities of their kings (xxviii. 36; with 2 Kings xxiv. 15;

xxv. 7; Jeremiah xxxix. 7; Hi. 11); the rapid victories of the Romans (xxviii. 49—52), under the figure of an eagle, which was their standard; an enemy coming from the end of the earth, as in fact Vespasian did, from Britain, against Jerusalem (see page 27);—the miseries to be sustained by them when besieged (xxviii. 52—58, with 2 Kings vi. 28, 29), but more particularly with the account given by the Jewish historian Josephus, of the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans. Their present conduct and condition, as accomplished under our own observation (xxviii. 50, &c.).

7. Prophecy concerning our Lord Jesus Christ (xviii. 15, &c., with John i. 45; vi. 14; Acts iii. 22; vii. 37). The Messiah here is more explicitly foretold than in the preceding books, as the completion of the Mosaic dispensation. The preparation this prophecy made for the coming of Christ remarkably appears in the expectation of the Samaritans (John iv. 25), who admitted no other books as inspired than those of the Pentateuch, but who to this day ground their expectation of the Messiah on this prophecy. (See Jowett's *Christian Researches in Syria and the Holy Land.*) Chap. xxi. 22, 23, with Gal. iii. 13, refers to a law which has a prophetic reference to Christ; He who was in the form of God (Phil. ii.), hanging on a tree, made a curse for us. What a mystery of love is man's redemption! (Ephes. iii. 18, 19); who can estimate the guilt of rejecting it! (Heb. ii. 3; x. 29.)

§ 2. THE HISTORICAL BOOKS.

The Pentateuch is partly historical, but its leading feature, particularly of the four last books is, that it contains the Law given by God to Moses. The next division of the Old Testament is altogether historical. It comprises twelve books; Joshua, Judges, Ruth, two books of Samuel, two of Kings, two of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. It contains an account of the Jewish church and nation, from their first settlement in the promised land, after their 430 years' bondage in Egypt, and their forty years' wandering in the wilderness, to their re-settlement there after seventy years' captivity in Babylon; including a period of 1042 years from the death of Moses, A.M. 2553, or B.C. 1451, to

the Reformation established by Nehemiah after the return from the captivity, A.M. 3595, or B.C. 409.

The remark made, page 35, that the Old Testament is not strictly speaking a history of the Jews, but such a selection from their history by the Holy Spirit, as was best adapted to make men wise unto salvation, admits of abundant illustration in these books. Often great political events are passed by (as, for instance, the reign of Jeroboam the son of Joash, the longest and most glorious of all the kings of Israel, is compressed into a few sentences, 2 Kings xiv. 23—28), and details of private life are dwelt upon (Ruth; 1 Kings xvii.), because they display to us that which is of most esteem in God's sight, and that which it is of most importance for us to know; his character, his grace, his providence, &c.; the workings of the human heart, and the nature of men's duties, both to God and their fellow-creatures, in those situations and under those circumstances in which men are usually placed and most need instruction; while interwoven with the whole may be traced, as the great leading subject, the preparation made for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour.

On the Book of JOSHUA.

So called because it relates what was transacted by him as the successor of Moses in the government of Israel.

It comprehends the history of about thirty years, and may be divided into four parts.

1. God's confirmation of Joshua as Moses's successor (chap. i.).

God's promise of assistance to Joshua teaches us the use we should make of his promises as encouragement to exert ourselves, making his word our constant study and only rule of action.

2. An account of the conquest of the land of Canaan (chap. ii.—xii.). The sun and moon, at the prayer of Joshua, standing still, is a remarkable illustration of Jam. v. 16. "The good man's prayer is among the reasons by which the Omnipotent is moved in the administration of the universe." It is very important to view this conquest as an illustration of the honour God puts on faith and obedience; and when we read the destruction of these nations, let us remember their wickedness (Lev. xviii. 24, 25, 30;

Deut. ix. 4.), and the necessity for their extermination from facts illustrating their influence in drawing the Israelites into sin, who alone stood forth as the light and hope of the world; (Numb. xxv. xxxi., at Baal-peor; 1 Kings xi. 1; Solomon, &c.) Consider, that these nations were the descendants of holy Noah: consider the warnings they had neglected: the deluge; the destruction of the five cities of the plain; the instruction and example of Abraham and the Patriarchs; the plagues of Egypt; the destruction of Pharaoh; the miraculous passage of Jordan; the overthrow of Jericho, &c.; the convictions of their own consciences. (ii. 9. 24; v. 1.)

3. The division of the conquered land (xii—xxii.) according to the tribes. This kept them distinct, and thus was provision made for the fulfilment of Jacob's prophecy respecting the Messiah springing from Judah (Gen. xlix.).

4. The dying address and counsels of Joshua to the people; their renewal of their covenant; and his death and burial (xxiii. xxiv.). As Moses, at the age of 120 years (Deut. xxix. 1), so Joshua (chap. xxiv. 14.), at the advanced age of 110 years, spends his last breath in exhorting the Israelites to a remembrance of God's mercy, and to an observance of his laws. The honour of God was the great ruling principle of all his conduct. In this respect compare this warrior and statesman with those whom the world idolizes; that you may not be deceived by the admiration of false glory and false patriotism. Joshua is also a remarkable instance of the honour God puts upon them that honour him (iv. 14), and of the beneficial influence which one holy man may be permitted to exercise over a whole nation (compare xxiv. 31, with Judges ii. 10). Whoever acts upon his resolution shall share his blessing (xxiv. 15, with Matt. x. 32).

The great subject of this book is the faithfulness of God to his promise to Abraham (Gen. xxii. 17), Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 3), Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 4); that their posterity should possess the land of Canaan. Their difficulties and sinfulness were great; yet, to the praise of God's grace, Joshua again and again says (xxi. 45; xxiii. 14), "Not one thing hath failed," &c.

The name Joshua means Jesus, a *Saviour* (Heb. iv. 8; Acts vii. 45). Canaan is a type of Heaven. The triumphs

through faith (Heb. xi. 29) of the Israelites under Joshua, are a striking illustration of the final triumph of the Church, and of every Christian, through Jesus, the Captain of our salvation (Heb. ii. 10), the Author and Finisher of our faith (Heb. xii. 2).

On the Book of JUDGES.

This book treats of events intermediate between the death of Joshua and the establishment of Regal government, and principally of fourteen of those illustrious persons whom, under the name of Judges, God raised up; not in regular succession, but from time to time, to govern Israel during that period, and to deliver them from the oppressions of their enemies. It may be divided into two parts.

1. It gives an account of the farther conquests of the Israelites in the land of Canaan; of their disobedience to the commands of God, and their consequent subjection to the king of Mesopotamia. It then states the appointment of Othniel, the first Judge of Israel; and contains the history to the death of Samson, recording frequent relapses, terrible oppressions, and wonderful deliverances. These events are included in chap. i.—xvi., where the regular history closes, including a period of about 300 years.

2. It contains an appendix, informing us of events which happened not long after the death of Joshua; particularly of the introduction of idolatry through Micah, and the consequent corruption of manners, illustrated by the account of the horrible lust of the Gibeathites, and the almost utter destruction of the Benjamites for protecting them (chap. xvii.—xxi.); presenting, as indeed the whole book does, a fearful view of the corruption of our nature.

Among the topics to be noticed in this book are—

1. *The state of the Israelites before the appointment of the Judges.*—Every man did that which was right in his own eyes (xvii. 6); and then soon followed idolatry, and insecurity to property and life (xix. xx.); shewing that there can be neither true religion nor true liberty but in subjection to civil government. The book of Joshua shews us the blessing attending union founded on truly religious principles; the tribes acting together under the commands of Joshua, and in the fear of God, were irresistible. The book of Judges shews the reverse of this.

Observe how idolatry began in the worship of the true God by an image, by one who thought he had the sanction of God's providence for what he did (xvii. 13). It, however, soon spread from one family to the whole tribe of Dan, where it continued more than 300 years (xviii. 30, 31, with 1 Sam. iv., "the captivity of the land," referring to the taking of the ark). Thus deceitful is sin, thus rapid its progress (Luke xii. 15, with chap. xvii. 2).

Illustration which this Book affords,

(1) Of man's need of salvation, (2) the readiness of God to save, and (3) the manner in which God saves.

(1) *Man's need of salvation.*—As illustrating this it may be remarked, that with respect to the Canaanites, the manifestation of revealed truth through the laws and religious institutions of the Israelites, and particularly the victories and miracles of Joshua, had no other effect upon them than to induce them to oppose and corrupt the professors of that truth. And with respect to the Israelites, we see them, at the very moment they are appointed to be the executioners of God's wrath against idolatry, themselves becoming idolaters, notwithstanding severe punishments for so doing; we see succeeding generations, through a period of 300 years, relapsing into sin "after the judge died" (ii. 19). Such is human nature on a large scale. In individual cases, observe the cruelties to which the love of power led Adonibezek (i. 7), and Abimelech (ix. 5); as well as the idolatry to which the love of ease led the Israelites. (See John iii. 7, "Marvel not," &c.)

(2) *The readiness of God to save.*—In illustration of this, see chap. iii. 7, 9, and 12, 15, and again iv. 1, 3, and again vi. 1, 7, and again x. 15; viii. 33. That God should say his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel (x. 16), and that for such a people he worked such mighty deliverances, presents to us an astonishing view of his readiness to save (Micah vii. 18—20; Rom. v. 8).

(3) *The manner in which God saves.*—The impenitent Canaanites were not saved. Abimelech, though an Israelite, was cut off in his iniquity (ix. 56). Though such deliverers were raised for the Israelites, they were made to feel how evil and bitter a thing it is to sin against God. They were so saved that the glory of their salvation belonged only to

God; that none could vaunt himself, and say, Mine own hand hath saved me (vii. 2). All cause of boasting was taken away, both from the deliverer and those whom he delivered. Judging as men usually act and think, there was a manifest disproportion between the means used and the effect produced; that the attention might be especially directed to that which is usually so overlooked,—the importance of faith (Heb. xi. 32—40), and the influences of the Spirit of the Lord (iii. 10; vi. 34; xi. 29; xiii. 25; xiv. 6, 19; xv. 14). And thus by these temporal deliverances, is shadowed forth to us the manner in which we are saved by Christ. The unbelieving world perish, and the unholy professor; while from those who are saved all boasting is excluded. Faith, and the things of the Spirit, which to man naturally are foolishness (1 Cor. ii. 14), God in the Gospel especially honours. That treasure is committed to earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God (2 Cor. iv. 7). And thus is the harmony of the Old and New Testaments remarkably seen, especially in regard to the leading object of both, to make us wise unto salvation.

On the Book of RUTH.

It contains the history of Ruth, a native of Moab, who lived in the time of the Judges. Her son Obed was David's grandfather. This book may therefore be considered as an appendix to that of Judges, which precedes it; and also an introduction to the two books of Samuel, which follow it; as the chief subject of those books is David. The book of Ruth contains the origin of David's family, and his descent from Judah (iv. 18, with Gen. xxxviii. 29).

Among the topics of this book may be noticed—

1. The Providence of God over Individuals.

The wonders of that Providence appear in the means by which God brought about the conversion of Ruth, and her admission into the family of the Messiah, through the famine in Israel, Elimelech's misfortunes, his son's sin in marrying a Moabitess, and her own affliction in becoming a widow: thus overruling evil for good (Ps. cxix. 71).

2. *The Varieties of Character, &c. introduced.*

Elimelech's over-anxiety to provide for his family, snaring him to forsake the land where God had fixed his tabernacle, issues in the impoverishing of that family. Boaz remained, and prospered.

Naomi, her afflictions a striking instance of the changes to which human life is subject. "Ten years have turned Naomi into Mara. What assurance is there of these earthly things, whereof one hour may strip us? What man may say of the years to come, 'Thus I will be?'" But her afflictions exhibit to us her fortitude under them, and give a lustre to her affectionate concern for her daughters-in-law, and in the expression of which she shews equal wisdom and tenderness. Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law may learn much from this story.

Orpah wept, but returned to her idols: her good resolutions failed on trial. There may be much that is lovely in character without true conversion to God: as in the rich young man recorded Mark x. 21.

Ruth loved Naomi for her piety; her decision was founded not merely on natural affection, but religious conviction. The poverty of Naomi; her own declaration (i. 16), "thy God," &c., "my," &c.; implying a direct renunciation of idolatry. The testimony of Boaz, ii. 12, shews this. "Oh the sure and bountiful payment of the Almighty! Who ever forsook the Moab of this world for the true Israel, and did not at length rejoice in the change?" *Bp. Hall*.

3. *The preparation made for the coming of our Lord.*

It has been remarked, that the subject of this book might, at the time it was written, have seemed of so private a nature, that the generality of people might not have thought it worth recording; but we Christians may plainly see the wisdom of God in having done it. It had been foretold to the Jews that the Messiah should be of the tribe of Judah (Gen. xlix. 10); and it was afterwards revealed further that he should be of the family of David. It was therefore necessary, for the full understanding of these prophecies, that the history of the family of David in that tribe should be written before the prophecies were fulfilled, that so there might not be the least suspicion of fraud or design; and thus this book, these prophecies, and the accomplishment

of them, serve to illustrate and explain each other. The adoption, into the line of the Messiah, of Ruth, an heathen, a Moabitess (Deut. xxiii. 3), seems also to be a pre-intimation of that great mystery, to be revealed under the Gospel, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promises, in Christ (Eph. iii. 6—9).

On the First Book of SAMUEL.

The two books of Samuel are also called the First and Second Books of Kings, as being two of those four books which contain the history of the kings of Israel and Judah. The First Book of Samuel contains the account of the change of government from that of Judges to Kings; including a period of about eighty years, from the birth of Samuel during the judicature of Eli, to the death of Saul, the first king of Israel.—It may be thus divided :

1. The judicature of Eli, as introductory to our notice of Samuel (chap. i—iv.).
2. The judicature of Samuel (chap. v.—xii).
3. The reign of Saul, as introductory to our notice of David (xii.—xxx.).

The fact that Samuel was the most famous Prophet after Moses, and the first of that succession of Prophets (Acts iii. 24) the great subject of whose prophecies was Christ; and that David was the greatest personal type of Christ (Luke i. 32), accounts for the prominency thus given to Samuel and David, and further illustrates how interwoven with the historical part of the Old Testament is the preparation for the coming of Christ.

This book discloses a grand prophecy of Christ, who is (ii. 10) for the first time in Scripture spoken of as the Messiah, or Anointed, and also as a king, before that office was established among the Israelites. Who doth not see, saith St. Austin, that the spirit of Hannah prophesied of the Christian religion, the city of God, whose king and founder is Christ; and of the grace of God, from which the proud are estranged, but with which the humble are filled? This indeed is the chief import of this hymn, the words of which are too magnificent to be confined to so low a sense as that of the circumstances which immediately respected Hannah.—

See Bishop Patrick, and compare Hannah's song with that of Mary (Luke i. 46).

The character of the Mosaic dispensation, as a ministration of condemnation, intended to shew man his need of a Divine Mediator, is seen in the awful punishment of the men of Bethshemesh (vi. 19). In their inquiry, who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" they asked a question which the Gospel only can fully answer.

Observe also the honour put upon sacrifice (vii. 10): as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Lord smote the Philistines. Thus the historical parts of the Old Testament shadowed forth the doctrinal parts of the New (Eph. i. 7; 2 Cor. ii. 14).

On the Second Book of SAMUEL.

This book contains the history of the reign of David, occupying a period of nearly forty years. The great importance of the history of David, as a clue to our understanding so many parts of Scripture, particularly the Psalms, seems to demand a fuller notice of him than of any other person in the Old Testament.

It may be remarked, that David was crowned king at Jerusalem rather more than a thousand years before our Lord's birth, and reigned over all the tribes as many years as our Lord lived on earth—about thirty-two or thirty-three years.

Among the topics to be noticed in this book, are—

1. *The Triumphs of David.*—As in the First Book of Samuel, David's forbearance towards Saul, so in this book, and after the death of Saul, is seen his anxiety that every step he took towards the possession of the kingdom should be directed by God (ii. 1). It has been remarked, that in a civil war of seven years' continuance, which followed upon Saul's death, David never once lifted up his sword against a subject, and, at the end of it, he punished no rebel, he remembered no offence but the murder of his rival. The spoils of war he dedicated to God (viii. 11). His first concern, when established on his throne, was to promote the honour of God (vi. 1; vii. 2), and the religious welfare of his people. See also 1 Chron. xvi. 43, shewing he did not inhabit his own house till he had

brought the ark to Zion; desiring not to give sleep to his eyes or slumber to his eye-lids, until he had found out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.

2. *The troubles of David.*—These followed upon his grievous fall, and are the more remarkable as viewed in connexion with his deep repentance. In reference to which,

Observe (1) his respect for his reprover. How different his conduct to Nathan from that of Herod to John the Baptist! David afterwards called one of his own children by the prophet's name (1 Chron. iii. 5), and shewed confidence in him as long as he lived (1 Kings i. 24, 27, 32—34). (2) His unreserved confession. How different from Adam and Eve (Gen. iii.) and Saul (1 Sam. xv.). (3) His deep humiliation before God and man. This is seen in his earnest prayer for the infant's life, which, had it been granted, must have perpetuated his shame; and from Ps. li. 4, "Against thee, thee only, have I," &c., so expressive of *godly* sorrow; a Psalm which he not only wrote but published. (4) The resignation of his after-life under the heavy chastisements of the Almighty. See xv. 25, &c.

3. *His heavy punishments.*—Death of his infant (xii. 19); Amnon's crime and death (xiii.); Absalom's murder of his brother Amnon; rebellion and its multiplied evils: David's flight from Jerusalem, &c., of which we have a most affecting account (xv. 30); the cursing of Shimei (xvi. 5—8); the treachery of Ahithophel, his own familiar friend (Ps. xli. 9); Absalom, his darling child, cut off in his iniquity (xviii. 33); the revolt of Sheba (xx.); "the sword never departing from his house." Who will dare to make David's fall an excuse for sin, when it was so punished even after such repentance?

4. *David's restoration to his throne.*—Again are we called to view his renewed concern for the promotion of God's honour (xxii. xxiii. 1—7; see also 1 Chron. xxviii. xxix.) Yet again also is he betrayed into sin, by numbering his people, (xxiv.) showing he thus put his trust in men rather than in God. By the display of this tendency to sin in the best men, the need of the dispensation of the Gospel is strongly implied.

The most remarkable prophecy in this book respecting the promised Messiah, is xxviii. 5, to be compared with Acts ii. 30; shewing these *sure* mercies of David refer to our

Lord. It is particularly to be observed, that David *knew* that God had sworn to him to raise up out of his family Christ, whose throne should be established for ever, and that the assurance of everlasting salvation, which God had given him, as one of those who believed in the promised Saviour, was his great support under the disappointments of life, and in the immediate prospect of death.

The insufficiency of repentance alone, however sincere and deep (xxiv. 10, 17), and the honour God put upon sacrifice, as the divinely appointed means of removing his anger, is remarkably seen in chap. xxiv. 25, with 1 Chron. xxi. 26, 27. The Lord answered David's prayer from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering, and the Lord commanded the angel, and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof. Thus is the anger of God turned away from penitent sinners by the sacrifice of Christ; and this is another illustration afforded how the historical parts of the Old Testament shadow forth the doctrinal parts of the New Testament.

On the First Book of KINGS.

This book embraces a period of about one hundred and twenty-six years, from the anointing of Solomon and his admission as a partner in the throne of David, to the death of Jehoshaphat. It may be divided into two principal parts.

(1) The history of the *undivided* kingdom under Solomon (i—xi.). (2) The history of the *divided* kingdom, when the twelve tribes separated into two kingdoms; the tribes of Judah and Benjamin forming the kingdom of Judah, under his son Rehoboam and his successors; and the ten tribes forming the kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and his successors (xii—xxii.).

After this division the ten tribes continued two hundred and fifty-four years, under nineteen kings, all of whom were idolaters. Yet to them were sent Elijah and Elisha. (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) The kingdom of Judah continued three hundred and eighty-eight years, under twenty kings of the line of David, of whom Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah, were pious, and Manasseh a penitent.

The history of these thirty-nine kings is so given as to shew mankind the certainty of the fulfilment of God's pro-

mises and threatenings; and especially that righteousness exalts a nation, and sin ruins it. Compare Levit. xxvi. 30 with 1 Kings xiii. 2, 2 Kings xxiii. 8.; Deut. xxviii. 53. with 2 Kings vi. 28, &c.; and Levit. xxvi. 31 with 2 Kings xxv.; prophecies fulfilled many hundred years after they were uttered, are pledges to us of the coming of that day when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and be judged every man according to his works, (Rev. xx. 12; 2 Pet. iii. 11.)

Among the topics to be noticed in this book, are—

1. *The reign of Solomon*,—the most distinguished feature of which was the building and dedication of the temple, and the solemn possession which God took of it. "Let us imagine to ourselves a building where scarce any thing appeared less valuable than silver and gold; a building of which God himself condescended to be the Architect (1 Chron. xxviii. 12—19), and which had therefore in the design and execution all the perfection that Infinite Wisdom could give it. Before this building, let us think we see the nation of the Israelites assembled, encircling their king seated upon an exalted throne of burnished brass, with all the ensigns of majesty and royalty; whilst, amid the harmony of different kinds of instruments, with the acclamations of a whole people joining in a grand chorus of praise and thanksgiving, the glory of Jehovah, or a body of light above the brightness of the sun, descends from heaven and fills the temple. Imagination can hardly reach the amazing idea. But this is the scene described by the sacred writer: 'And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place,' " &c. (2 Chron. v. 11—14.) Never after this let us entertain low notions of God, or of the house where his honour dwelleth. And let us not think that He is less present with us than he was with Israel. Is the Christian Church less favoured than the Jewish Church was? Have we lost any thing by the incarnation of his Son? Surely not. (Matt. xviii. 20, "Where two or three are gathered together in," &c. Heb. iv. 14, 15, "Seeing we have a great High-priest," &c., "come boldly," &c. Heb. x. 19, &c. "Having therefore," &c. &c., "to enter into the holiest by," &c. "let us," "full assurance," &c. See also Eph. ii. 21, 22.)—See *Bp. Horne*.

The grievous fall of Solomon has been already slightly

noticed, p. 45, and forms the most striking instance on record of the insufficiency of the highest endowments to preserve man from the grossest folly and sin, John xv. 5. He found also, as all will find, that the way of transgression is hard, 1 Kings xi. 14. 23, 26.

2. *The division of the nation into two kingdoms of Judah and Israel*; the former under Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and his successors, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat; the latter, under Jeroboam and his successors, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab.

Jeroboam presents a striking contrast to David. God raised him to the throne, (xi. 31.), solemnly promised he would make his throne as secure as David's. (xi. 38.) But Jeroboam did not trust God, as David did, to accomplish his promises. In violation of God's command, (Deut. xii. 5; 2 Chron. vii. 12.) which had appointed to the twelve tribes one temple, one priesthood, and one altar, and that at Jerusalem, he introduced the worship of God by images at Dan and Bethel. The different issue to David and Jeroboam is very remarkable. For nearly 500 years the throne of Judah was preserved hereditary in the family of David, but the destruction of Jeroboam's family almost immediately after his death, and even that of the kingdom of Israel more than 200 years after, is traced to this sin, (1 Kings xiv. 9, 10; 2 Kings xvii. 21—23.) the motive to which was that it would establish him and his kingdom. Thus foolish is worldly wisdom. (Prov. xiv. 12. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.) (Prov. xii. 3. A man shall not be established by wickedness.) (Prov. xiii. 6. Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way, but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.)

3. *The typical nature of the history of the Old Testament.*—Solomon's reign, the most peaceful, prosperous, and glorious, of the Jewish history, is also referred to by the sacred writers as shadowing forth in these respects the reign of the Messiah. See Ps. lxxii.

4. *The moral use of prophecies not immediately referring Christ.*—This is illustrated by a consideration of the very critical period in which God raised up the prophet of Judah, (ch. xiii.) who was sent to Jeroboam not merely to certify (as Davison remarks) the future fact that the altar should

be defiled, but to set a mark upon that sin which he calls the original sin of the ten tribes, which was nothing short of their adoption of a system of open idolatry as their national established religion. The punishment of the prophet would add great force to this warning, showing to Jeroboam, that if the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear. The prophecies and ministry of Elijah and Elisha are to be viewed in the same light, as called forth by the increasing iniquities of the ten tribes, to warn them of their danger, and thus to display at once both the long-suffering and the holiness of God.

On the Second Book of Kings,

This is a continuation of the first book, and describes the government and actions of many successive kings of Judah and Israel, from the death of Jehoshaphat, A. M. 3115, to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, A. M. 3416. It may be divided into two principal parts.

1. The contemporary history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, to the end of that of Israel in its captivity by Shalmaneser king of Assyria.

2. The history of the decline and fall of the kingdom of Judah, and its captivity by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

In tracing the decline and fall of idolatrous Israel, an awful illustration is afforded of the misery of sin. Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam the second, after a reign of six months is killed by Shallum, who, after a reign of one month, is killed by Menahem : his son and successor; Pekahiah, is assassinated by Pekah, who is himself put to death by Hoshea.

The pre-eminence throughout and preservation of Judah, and of the family of David, show very remarkably the finger of Providence preparing for the coming of the Messiah, as foretold by prophecy. (Gen. xlix. 10 ; Isa. xi. 10.) While in the short period of 254 years the crown of Israel passed through nine different families, viz. Jeroboam, Baasha, Zimri, Omri, Jehu, Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, Hoshea ; the crown of Judah was preserved in the family of David 388 years, though at times the utmost effort was made to exterminate it. Notice Rehoboam's danger from Shishak, 2 Chron. xii. Abijah's from Jeroboam, 2 Chron.

xiii. 3.; that of Asa from Zerah, 2 Chron. xiv. 9. &c. &c. but particularly Athaliah's attack, 2 Kings xi.

The preservation of the house of David is the more remarkable from the great wickedness of many of that family, as Jehoram, Ahaziah, Ahaz, Amon, see 2 Chron. xxi. 7. Judah returned from captivity, Israel never did.

Nor is it to be forgotten, that though the two Books of Kings do not contain direct prophecies of Christ, yet during this period of their history, (particularly from the time of Jeroboam the second,) the prophets principally flourished, and "to Christ gave all the prophets witness." (Acts x. 43.)

The importance attached to the passover, in the revival of religion, (2 Chron. xxx. Hezekiah. xxxv. Josiah) is very observable; because that feast, more than any other, pointed to Christ: 1 Cor. v. 7.

Of the many prophecies fulfilled in this book, (ix. 21. 36; 1 Kings xxi. 23.) the most remarkable is that respecting Josiah. (1 Kings xiii. with 2 Kings xxiii. 15—20.) The prediction was delivered above 300 years before Josiah was born, yet during all these years no one gave his son the name, or assumed it himself, or attempted to fulfil the prophecy, until the appointed time arrived, and then Amon, a wicked prince, named his son Josiah, who himself does not appear to have been aware of the prophecy till after he had fulfilled it. See p. 55.

On the Two Books of CHRONICLES.

These books were written after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, and are called Chronicles because they contain an abstract in the order of time of the whole sacred history to the period when they were written, including about 3468 years.

One leading object of the writer, who was probably Ezra, appears to have been to point out from the public records, still preserved, the state of the different families before the captivity, that, at their return, they might again possess their respective inheritances. That the worship of God might be conducted as before, he enters minutely into the duties, genealogies, families, and orders of the Priests and Levites, and to stir the Jews to a holy zeal for restoring the temple and its service, he dwells on that part of the character of David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah, which illustrates their pious care in these respects.

The First Book of Chronicles may be divided into three parts:—

1. Genealogies from Adam to the time of Ezra, with short historical notices intermixed. (i.—ix.)
2. The history of Saul, with immediate reference to the translation of the kingdom from him to David. (x.)
3. The history of David, in which is an enlarged account of the regulations he made with regard to the public worship of God, such as fixing the order of the Priests and Levites, their various duties, &c., and the preparation made for building the temple. (xi.—xxix.)

In the effect of David's liberality, particularly observing the spirit in which he gave (xxix.), may be seen the influence which a good example has on others. Precepts may lead, but examples draw.

The concluding scenes of David's life, as recorded in this book, especially his solemn farewell to Solomon and his subjects, throw great light and lustre on his character, as the man after God's own heart, pre-eminently zealous for the glory of God, his worship and service, and ascribing all that was good in himself, both as to act and intention, entirely to God's grace. The higher are our views of God the more lowly shall we think of ourselves. In proportion to our gratitude will be our humility. (xxix. 13, 14.)

One important use of the genealogical tables is to give that succession of families through whom it had been prophesied the Messiah was to come. Hence the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, are marked with the greatest care. It is a very striking fact, that while the Jews were most careful to preserve the succession of their families, from the beginning of their history to the time of our Lord's coming, no genealogies have since been kept, which can in any measure be depended upon; the providence of God, even in this particular, proving Jesus to be the Christ; since it is rendered impossible that any person, since our Lord's coming, could prove himself to be of that tribe, to which prophecy had limited the Messiah.

The Second Book of Chronicles begins with the reign of Solomon, and the building of the temple, and contains a history of about 480 years, till the return from Babylon. It coincides very much with the first and second books of Kings, except that, as in them, the history of Judah and

Israel were mixed together, in this we have scarcely any thing but the history of David's descendants, much of which we had not before.

As an illustration of the importance of comparing this book with those of Kings, in order to have a just view of the characters described, it may be remarked that Chronicles gives no account of Solomon's apostasy, and Kings no account of Manasseh's repentance.

Again, in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 32, 33, referring to the reign of Josiah, it is said that the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers; and again, "all his days they departed not from following the Lord God of their fathers." From these words alone, we should have a very mistaken view of their actual character, as from Jer. iii. 10, and other parts of the first twelve chapters of his prophecy, delivered during this reign, we learn it was but an external obedience, a restraint upon, not a change of disposition, an hypocrisy which threw off its mask as soon as Josiah died; and this also explains 2 Kings xxiii. 26, why, notwithstanding Josiah's piety, and the extent to which he carried the reformation, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath.

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE REIGNS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

Script. Reference	KINGS OF JUDAH.	Years before Christ	Yr. of reig.	Script. Reference	KINGS OF ISRAEL.	Years before Christ	Yrs of reig.
	SAUL (reigned from 1055—1055) 40						
	DAVID (— 1055—1015) 40						
	Solomon (— 1015— 976) 40						
	Dedication of Temple.....	1004					
1 Kings xi.	Rehoboam began to reign.....	975	17	1 Kings xii.	Jeroboam Began to reign...	975	22
	Revolt of ten tribes.....	975			Idolatry of the golden calves.....	975	
1 Kings xv.	Temple plundered by Shishak...	971		— xiii.	Warning from prophet of Judah	974	
2 Ch. xiii.	Abijah, or Adijam.....	958	3		Jeroboam's miserable death.....	954	
1 Kings xv.	Victory over Jeroboam.....	957		— xv.	Nadab, son of Jeroboam.....	954	1
	Asa.....	955	41		Utter destruction of family of	953	
	Piety.....				Jeroboam.....		
2 Ch. xiv.	Victory over Zerah—covenant				BAASHA—Persisting in the sins for		
xv.	with God.....	941			which he was raised up to de-		
1 Kings xv.	War with Baasha.....	930			stroy the house of Jeroboam.....	933	2
	Misconduct under Hanani's			— xvi.	Eliab, son of Baasha.....	930	
	reproof—Diseased in his feet,				Murdered when drunk, and the		
	yet sought.....	917			whole family of Baasha de-		
2 Ch. xvi.	not to the Lord, but to the				stroyed.....	929	7 1/2
	physicians.....				ZIMRI turns himself to death.....	928	12 1/2
					OMRI reigns jointly with Tibni till.....	925	
					Builds Samaria.....	924	
1 Kings xv.	Jehoshaphat.....	914	25		Ahah, son of Omri.....	917	20
2 Ch. xvii.	His heart lifted up in the ways			— xvii.	Elijah foretells a famine—raises		
	of the Lord—great earnestness				widow's son.....	910	
	for the religious instruction of			— xviii.	Elijah's sacrifice and destruction	906	
	his people.....			— xxi.	of prophets of Baal.....	899	
1 Kings	Expedition to Ramoth-Gilead—			2 Kings i.	Ahaziah, son of Ahab, the pers-		
xxii.	affinity with Ahab.....	897			ecutor of Elijah.....	897	1
2 Kings iii.	Elisha procures water for three				Jehoram, brother of Ahaziah, and		
2 Ch. xxi.	armies.....	895			son of Ahab.....	896	11
2 Kings	Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat.....	892	7	— ii.	Elijah taken up to heaven.....	896	
viii.	Murders all his brethren, and			— vi.	Stage of Samaria.....	893	
	establishes idolatry—is smitten			— ix.	Jehoram killed in the field of		
	with disease.....				Naboth by Jehu.....	884	

Script. Reference.	KINGS OF JUDAH.	Years before Christ	Yrs. of reig.	Script. Reference.	KINGS OF ISRAEL.	Years before Christ	Yrs. of reig.
2 Kings viii.	Ahasiah, grandson of Jehoshaphat, and illustrating the evil effects of his affinity with Ahab.....	885	1	2 Kings x. JERU.	Destroyed the prophets of Baal, but maintained the worship of the golden calves.....	884	28
2 Ch. xxiii.	ATRIASIA, daughter of Ahab, widow of Jehoram, and mother of Ahasiah, usurps the throne, and attempts the murder of the whole royal family of David].....	884	6				
2 Kings xi.	Josiah, or Jehoshaphat, son of Ahasiah, anointed king, and Athaliah slain.....	878	40				
2 Ch. xxiii.	Repaired the temple.....	856		— xiii.	Jehoshaphat.....	857	17
	Apostasy after the death of Josiah.....	842			Jehoshaphat associated with his father Jehoram—Began to reign alone.....	841	14
2 Kings xiv.	Jehoshaphat.....	839	29	— xiv.	Visit Eliah on his death-bed.....	839	
2 Ch. xiv.	Began well, ended badly.....	826			Jeroboam II.—Under whom the kingdom attained its height of glory.....	825	41
	Challenges Jehoshaphat, and is overcome.....				Jonah, Hosea, Amos, prophesied in Israel, contemporary with Joel and Isaiah in Judah.....		
2 Kings xv.	Ahasiah, or Uzziah.....	810	52		Inter-regnum.....	784	
2 Chron. xxvi.	A striking illustration of the danger of prosperity to a good man — invades the priests' office—smitten with leprosy, and dies a leper.....	765		— xv.	Isaiah, fourth and last in descent from Jahu, as foretold.....	773	6m.
	Joel and Isaiah prophesied in his reign.....	758	16		Murdered by.....	772	
2 Chron. xxvii.	Jotham.....	742	16		SHALLUM, who in a month is killed by.....	772	10y.
	Mighty because he prepared his way before the Lord, but the people did yet corruptly. Micah began to prophesy.	741			MENAHKEM, who succeeds to the throne.....	761	2
2 Chron. xxviii.	Ahas—Very wicked.....	727	29		Pekahiah, son of Menahkem, murdered by.....	759	
	120,000 men of Judah slain in one day, and 200,000 taken captive by Pekah, king of Israel.....	713		— xvii.	PEKAH.....	740	
2 Kings xviii.	Hezekiah.—Distinguished for his trust in God, yet, when left to himself, falling into sin.....	712			Part of Israel carried captive.....	730	9
2 Ch. xxix.	Sennacherib's first invasion.....	710			Pekah slain by Hoshea.....	721	
Is. xxxvi.	Hezekiah's sickness.....				Anarchy follows for nine years.....		
— xxxviii.	The ambassadors from Babylon.....				Hoshea began to reign.....		
	Sennacherib besieges Jerusalem. The Assyrian army destroyed.....				Samaria taken—the ten tribes carried into captivity.....		
2 Chron. xxxiii.	Nahum prophesied in his reign.....	698	55		This was the end of the kingdom of Israel, after having continued a separate kingdom 254 years.....		
	Manasseh.—Filling Jerusalem with blood of the innocent, yet, on repenting, finding mercy—a monument of God's grace sanctifying affliction.....	643	2				
2 Kings xxi.	Amon—Short and wicked reign.....	641	31				
2 Chron. xxxiii.	Josiah—Early piety—great seal in the reformation of religion—solemn passover kept.....	624					
2 Kings xxii.	Zephaniah and Jeremiah began to prophesy.....	610	3 m.				
2 Chron. xxxiv.	Jehoshaphat, or Shallum, son of Josiah.....	610	11				
2 Kings xxiii.	Jehoiakim, brother of Shallum.....	606					
Jer. xxv.	Carried captive to Babylon, and with him Daniel.....	599					
Dan. i.	His miserable death, as foretold by Jeremiah.....						
Jer. xlii.	Habakkuk prophesied.....						
Is. lvi.	Jehoiakim, son of Jehoiakim.....						
— xxxvi.							
30.							
2 Kings xxiv.	Zedekiah, son of Josiah.....	588	11 y.				
— xxv.	Obediah and Ezekiel prophesied.....						
Jer. lii.							

N.B. Those names in Capitals are the heads of separate families.

The remarks already made (93), on the chronological difficulties of Scripture, must be borne in mind on referring to this Table.

On the Book of EZRA.

Ezra was a priest, and is generally supposed to have revised all the books of which the Holy Scriptures did then consist, disposing them in their proper order, and settling the canon of Scripture for his time.

This book gives the history of about eighty years, and is a continuation of Jewish history from the time at which the Chronicles conclude; it beginning with a repetition of the two verses with which the Second Book of Chronicles ends. It consists of three parts, giving an account

1. Of the return of Zerubbabel, of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, particularly informing us upon what encouragement, and what numbers returned. (i. ii.)

2. The rebuilding and dedication of the temple, notwithstanding the repeated hindrances from the Samaritans. (iii. — vi.)

3. The journey of Ezra to Jerusalem as the deputy of Artaxerxes, and on his arrival his deep mourning over and dissolution of the marriages of the Jews with heathen women. (vii. — x.)

This book is the history of the fulfilment of the prophecies of Isa. xlv. 28, and Jer. xxv. 12; xxix. 10, one of whom had predicted the name of their deliverer, the other the exact time of their deliverance. It is important also to remark, that God foretold by his prophet Jeremiah, not only the time of the return of the Jews, but the penitent state of heart which should be the cause of it. (xxix. 12—14; xxxi. 8, 9, 18—31, &c.)

The gracious commission of Artaxerxes (vii. 11—26) is also a wonderful illustration of God's power over men's hearts, and of his care of his church; Artaxerxes' decree being much more advantageous to the Jews than even that of Cyrus, and every opposition they met with wrought for their good in the end. (v. vi.)

The book of Ezra should be read with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. (Compare Ezra v. with Hag. i. 12, and Zech. iii. iv.) These prophets were raised up particularly to encourage the people in the arduous work of building the temple, and in so doing particularly refer to Christ. (See Haggai ii. 7, 9; Zech. ii. 10; iii. 8. 10.)

On the Book of NEHEMIAH.

Nehemiah, the writer of this book, was of the tribe of Judah. Though a Jew and a captive, he was, through the ever-ruling Providence of God, selected to the office of cup-bearer to Artaxerxes, the king of Persia; a situation of great emolument, and one of the most confidential in the whole court. Thus in the midst of abundance and honour, yet hearing of the distressed state of his Jerusalem, he was deeply afflicted by it. He made it the subject of solemn prayer; and after four months, an opportunity was given him of petitioning the king for leave to go to Jerusalem. The spirit of prayer, in which he made this petition, is very observable. The king, probably influenced by his queen, who was Esther, appointed Nehemiah governor of Jerusalem, with a commission to rebuild the walls, and provide for the welfare of his people. Nehemiah executed his commission for twelve years with great success, amidst great opposition. After this he returned to Artaxerxes at Shushan; but at length went back to Jerusalem, and employed various measures to promote the further reformation of the Jews, particularly in the correction of those abuses which had crept in during his absence. This book may be thus divided:—

Chap. i. and ii. 1—11, contains the account of Nehemiah's departure from Shushan and arrival at Jerusalem.

Chap. ii. 12—20; iii.—vi. 15. The building of the walls.

Chap. vii.—xii. The first reformation accomplished by Nehemiah.

Chap. xiii. The second reformation accomplished by Nehemiah on his return to Jerusalem.

Nehemiah presents to us a noble example of true patriotism; the principle from which it flows, the fear of God (v. 15); and the good at which it chiefly aims, to make religion the foundation of our country's welfare. In this view it may be remarked how anxious Nehemiah was to promote among his people the due observance of the Sabbath; neglect of which had brought upon them the wrath of God (xiii. 18). In his devout acknowledgment of God in every thing (i. 11; ii. 18, &c.); in his union of watchfulness with prayer, diligence with dependence (iv. 9); his

humility in tracing all good in himself to the grace of God (ii. 12; vii. 5) we may also imitate him. Sanballat and others ridiculed, persecuted Nehemiah, attempted to draw him into sin (ii. 19; vi. 6—12): but his success should be our encouragement, assuring us of the blessedness of the man that trusteth in God.

This book takes up the history of the Jews about twelve years after the close of the book of Ezra.

The administration of Nehemiah lasted about thirty-six years; and with this book closes the history of the Old Testament.

On the Book of ESTHER.

The name of God does not occur in this book; but no book contains more striking proofs of his providence. As the two preceding books illustrate the Lord's care of his people who had returned to Judea: so this book records a remarkable preservation not only of them but of the whole Jewish nation. We see in the events it records:

1. The *evil anticipated* by the providence of God, in the promotion of Esther, a poor Jewish orphan, to the throne of Persia; and in the great service rendered to the king by her relation Mordecai, in detecting a plot against his life. (Chaps. i. ii.)

2. The *evil threatened*, in the advancement of Haman, and his design of utterly extirpating the whole Jewish nation. (Chap. iii.)

3. The *evil defeated* and overruled to the greater good of the Jews, and even of the heathens. (Chaps. iv.—x.)

The power of the Persians being at that time universal, if the design of Haman had succeeded, not only the Jews in Persia, but throughout the world, would have been annihilated (ch. iii. 13, &c. viii. 9), and with them the whole visible church of God. In observing the means by which this evil was defeated, Ahasuerus' sleepless night (vi. 1) appears a very important link in the chain, and illustrates how the providence of God makes use of the most trifling, and what to us might seem the most accidental circumstances, to accomplish his will (Rom. viii. 28).

The Feast of Purim, instituted in commemoration of this deliverance of the Jews, is still kept annually by them, in

their month Adar, which corresponds with part of our February and March.

In reference to the confidence with which Mordecai anticipated deliverance (ch. iv. 14), Bishop Hall has the following important remark:—"He saw the day of their common destruction enacted; he knew the Persian decrees to be unalterable, but withal he knew there was a Messiah to come. He was so well acquainted with God's covenant assurances to his church, that he can, through the midst of those bloody resolutions, foresee indemnity to Israel; rather trusting the promises of God than the threats of man. This is the victory that overcomes all the fears and fury of the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 4, 5).

As the events recorded in the Book of Esther happened before some of those recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, the following dates may be of use:

Date.	Date.
Cyrus proclaims liberty to the Jews (Ezra i. 2.) 536	Darius Hystaspes) (Ezra v, vi.) 519
Foundation of the Temple laid (Ezra iii. 8—13.) 534	Esther made queen (Esther i, ii.) 518
Samaritans hinder the building of it (Ezra iv. 5.) 533	The Temple finished (Ezra vi.) 515
Artaxerxes (called in profane history Cambyses) forbids it 529	Haman plots the destruction of the Jews (Esther iii, iv.) 510
Haggai and Zechariah urge them to proceed (Ezra v. 1.) 520	Ezra sent to govern Judea (Ezra vii.) 467
The Samaritans again interfere, but are restrained by decree of Ahasuerus (or Nehemiah) 415	Nehemiah sent (Neh. ii.) . . . 445
	Malachi, the last of the prophets, contemporary with Nehemiah 415

Questions adapted to any chapter of the Historical Parts of the Old Testament.

After having read a chapter in the Historical Parts of the Old Testament, the following questions may be asked, as an assistance to draw out the improvement to be derived from it.

1. What persons are mentioned in this chapter?
2. What facts?
3. What places?
4. Point out the places in the map.
5. Are these persons, facts, places, mentioned in any other parts of the Bible?
6. Is there any account in this chapter of any duty performed?
7. Does it appear to have been performed in a right or a wrong spirit?
8. Is there any thing in this chapter which shews you the value of God's blessing, or the means by which you may obtain or lose it?

9. Is there any account of any sin committed?
 10. Can you trace what led to the commission of that sin?
 11. Can you trace by what consequences, either to themselves or to others, it was followed?
 12. Were they such consequences, especially to themselves, as they, before they committed the sin, thought would follow?
 13. How does God speak of that sin in other parts of the Bible?
 14. Can you compare what the persons did in this chapter, with the conduct of any others mentioned in Scripture?
 15. Does God give in this chapter any example, any command, promise, threatening, &c. which you can apply to yourself?
 16. What may you learn of God's character from this chapter? (See p. 140, &c.)
 17. Is there any prophecy given or fulfilled in this chapter?
 18. Is there any thing which reminds you of the Lord Jesus Christ, any type, or any thing which shews man's need of him as a Saviour?
 19. Any thing which shews man's need of the Holy Spirit?
 20. Is there any proverb illustrated by any of the events recorded in this chapter?
 21. Does any passage of this chapter recal to your mind any hymn, or verse of a hymn?
 22. Are you reminded in reading this chapter of any part of the prayers, or other formularies, of the Church of England?
- For further hints, refer to Archbishop Secker's Advice, p. 38.

Questions which may be used after having read through any of the Historical Books of the Old Testament, or parts of such books which include several chapters.

1. Why is this book called ———?
2. Over how long a period does the history contained in this book (or part of the book) extend?
3. How long was this before the birth of our Saviour?
4. What is the number of chapters in this book?
5. What are the principal subjects?
6. Can you arrange the chapters under these subjects?
7. Are there any references made to these subjects in any other parts of the Bible?
8. Have we any notice of these subjects in the Book of Psalms?
9. In what places did the principal events mentioned in this book happen?
10. Are any other remarkable events recorded in the Bible said to have happened in those places?
11. Are any other nations than that of the Israelites mentioned in this book? Give some account of them?
12. What are the names of the persons whose history is most prominent in this book.
13. Mention some of the most remarkable circumstances in the lives of those persons.
14. What are the excellencies or defects of their character?
15. Is any reference made to these persons in other parts of Scripture?

16. Do such references throw any additional light on their character? (See p. 76.)

17. Is there any person in Scripture of whom you are reminded as having acted like them, or who under the same circumstances acted very differently from them? (See David and Jeroboam, illustrating in some measure this question, page 170.)

18. What types are given in this book concerning our Saviour, either persons or things?

19. Can you shew from the New Testament in what the resemblance consisted?

20. What prophecies are there in this book respecting the Saviour?

21. What prophecies are given or fulfilled respecting others, persons or nations?

22. Are any, and what, miracles recorded in this book?

23. Any reference to natural history, as animals, trees, plants, &c.? (See page 89.)

24. Any references to manners and customs, &c. peculiar to Eastern nations, their houses, dress, &c.? (See page 98, &c.)

25. Did any, and what, prophets, whose writings form part of the Bible, live during this period.

26. Do their writings throw any light on the history here recorded?

Other questions are naturally suggested by the topics referred to p. 140, &c. As for instance:

1. What illustrations does this book (or part of a book) give of (1) the power of God? (2) God's knowledge and notice of what men do and think? (3) the justice of God in punishing sin? (4) his long-suffering in delaying to punish the wicked? (5) mercy in forgiving? (6) grace in helping? (7) readiness to hear prayer? (8) providence? (9) faithfulness in fulfilling his promises? &c. &c.

2. With these views of the perfections of God, contrast the character of man; any instances which occur in this book of men's weakness, ignorance of the future, injustice, impatience, cruelty, &c. (See Numb. xxiii. 19.)

3. Are there any instances in this book of those who resisted temptation?

4. Any instances of the blessings attending obedience to God?

5. Any instances of those who yielded to temptation?

6. What was the nature of the temptation by which they were overcome? (See p. 142.)

7. What illustrations of the folly and deceit of sin? (See p. 143, illustrating the nature of this question.)

8. The progress of sin. (See p. 144.)

9. Evil of sin. (See p. 144.)

10. Of what particular virtues is there any illustration, any instance of repentance, faith, &c., returning good for evil, &c.? (See 1 Cor. xiii. and Gal. v. 22, &c.)

11. Is there any illustration of counterfeit virtues; conduct that seemed right, but did not proceed from right motives? false repentance, zeal, &c. (See p. 147.)

12. Of what particular sins is there any illustration, as idolatry, un-

belief, neglect of warnings, abuse of God's blessings, &c., lying, covetousness, envy, pride, &c.? (See Gal. v. 20, 21.)

13. Are there any instances of good children, good parents, servants, masters, husbands, wives; good kings, magistrates, &c.; or the contrary?

14. What instances are given of those in affliction?

15. What were its effects upon them? Did it lead them to pray? Did it lead them to alter their conduct, &c.?

16. Give some illustration of the nature of human life; that is, of the disappointments, the fears, the sudden changes to which men are liable.

17. Is there any illustration in this book of the vanity of the world, the inability of things, which men most esteem, to make them happy, as riches, power, &c.?

18. What general proofs are afforded by the events of this book, of man's need of a Saviour, particularly observing any illustrations of the holiness of God in his abhorrence of sin?

19. What proof does this book afford of man's need of the Holy Spirit to expose to him his sin, and to enable him to overcome it? (These proofs may be shown by instances of men's tendency to sin, the self-deceit accompanying it, the vain excuses made for the commission of it, &c.)

20. Do you, from any thing recorded in this book, learn how and for what you ought to pray?

§ 3. THE POETICAL BOOKS.

This division is one of considerable antiquity. The Poetical Books, which are five in number—namely, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles or Song of Solomon, are so called, because they are almost wholly composed in Hebrew verse.

On the Book of Job.

Job was a real character (Ezek. xiv. 14; James v. 11), an inhabitant of Uz, in that part of Arabia bordering on Judea; and was probably descended from Uz, the eldest son of Nahor, Abraham's brother.

Elihu, in reckoning up the modes of Divine revelation, takes no notice of the delivery of the Mosaic Law; nor does there seem any allusion to the Jewish history in any part of the book. Hence, Job is supposed to have lived before Moses, and this book to be the oldest in the world. It may be divided into three parts.

1. A NARRATIVE of an eminent servant of God suddenly plunged from the greatest prosperity into deep affliction—the entire loss of property, children, health—which he bears with the most exemplary patience (chap. i. 22; ii. 10).

2. A CONTROVERSY, which was a source of yet heavier trial to Job, and which originated in the visit of his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. He was tempted to complain to them (chap. iii.) of his situation; but they, having taken up the erroneous notion that deep affliction was a certain proof of the great wickedness of him who was visited with it, instead of comforting, charged Job with hypocrisy, as guilty of some hidden wickedness (iv. 7—9; viii. 13; xviii. 21, and particularly xxii. 5, &c.).

In the vehemence with which Job asserts his integrity, he reflects not only on the injustice of his friends, but in some measure on the inequality of the providence of God; as though his good works entitled him to other treatment than that which he had received at God's hands. But so awful an error, as to account himself righteous in his own eyes (xxxii. 1, 2), kindled the wrath of a fourth friend, who had hitherto been silent. While condemning the unjust insinuations of Job's three friends, he sharply reproved him for "justifying himself, rather than God" (xxxiii. 8, 9; xxxiv. 5, 9, 35). After which the Lord himself answers Job out of the whirlwind. Not condescending to enter into any particular explanation of his conduct; but, from a consideration of his infinite and unsearchable greatness as seen even in creation (xxxviii.—xlii.), convincing Job of his presumption, his ignorance, and guilt in arraigning His providence (xl. 8).

3. The ISSUE OF THE NARRATIVE AND OF THE CONTROVERSY seen in the deep repentance of Job: God's reproof of Job's three friends; his appointing them to offer sacrifice, which, through the intercession of Job, removed from them God's anger, and his restoring Job to yet greater prosperity than he had before his affliction. (xlii.)

This book is interesting as containing the earliest record of Patriarchal religion, and as it was professed by one not of the promised seed (Gal. iv. 28).

This book also remarkably displays the providence of God, giving a deep insight into the plan of his moral government, both of men and angels, and illustrates, with

unrivalled magnificence, the glory of the Divine attributes : see, particularly, when the Almighty addresses Job, The doctrine of original sin is stated (xiv. 4; xv. 14—16.) Sacrifice, as the divinely appointed means of removing God's anger (i. 5; xlii. 8); the benefit of intercessory prayer (xlii. 8, 9). A reference is also made to a future resurrection and judgment to come (xix. 25—29).

But Job's faith in a promised Redeemer should be especially noticed (xix. 25—29); thus shewing the harmony of character in the servants of God in every age. Job, Abraham (John viii. 56), Moses (Heb. xi. 26), David (2 Sam. xliii. 5), the Prophets (1 Peter i. 10), deriving their chief happiness from the same source as those under the Christian dispensation; and which, indeed, constitutes the great happiness of heaven (Rev. i. 5). See Art. VII. of the Church of England.

1. Let the young imitate Elihu's humility (xxxii. 4—6). Though competent to speak best he spoke last.

2. How much of heavenly wisdom is necessary to conduct controversy properly, when even Job failed in it.

3. It well becomes us to confess ourselves to be miserable offenders, when even Job abhorred himself, and said, "Behold, I am vile." He who knows himself best, esteems himself least.

4. The *varying circumstances* under which religion was manifested in Job suggests an important hint for the examination of our own heart, which has been thus well expressed :—

"The moral climate in which true religion grows is of unequal temperature. If it seem to prosper, and bear its fruit under the glow of heat, it is strengthened also by the biting frost. The sincerity of the faith of Job was manifested by its permanence and its approach to maturity, under varying dispensations. It blest himself and others in prosperity. It was invigorated by adversity, and it burst forth again in strength and consistency, when the day of prosperity returned. We never require more of calm practical wisdom, in forming our judgment of our religious state, than when we contemplate our actions, while all things appear to favour obedience to the will of God."—*Wm. Wilson's Essays on Self-Examination.*

On the Book of Psalms.

This is a collection of sacred hymns, most of which were composed by David: hence called (2 Sam. xxiii. 1) the sweet Psalmist of Israel.

Bishop Horne describes the book of Psalms as an epitome of the Bible, adapted to the purposes of devotion.

Hooker says, What is there necessary for man to know, which the Psalms are not able to teach? Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times to be found.

In illustration of these remarks it may be noticed, that in this book there are some Psalms of praise and adoration, which display the majesty, power, goodness, and other attributes of God, as Ps. civ. cxxxix. Others are songs of thanksgiving, blessing God for mercies bestowed, as Ps. ciii. Others are prayers in which are implored the mercy of God, the pardon of sin, as Ps. li.; or deliverance from danger, as Ps. xvii; and affliction, as Ps. cxxiii.; or intercession is made for others—the church, as Ps. cxxii.—the heathen, as Ps. lxvii. Some of the Psalms are historical, as Ps. lxxviii., composed with a view to preserve the remembrance of the most considerable events which befel the Jewish nation; while others describe the excellency of God's law, as Ps. cxix.; the character of good and bad men, as Ps. i.; the vanity of human life, as Ps. xc. Lastly, some of them are prophetical, presenting us with several predictions relating to the Lord Jesus Christ and the times of the Gospel. Thus,—

Ps. xl. 6, with Heb. x. 5, speaks of our Lord's coming in our nature, and to abolish the Mosaic dispensation, of which "sacrifice and offering" was the distinguished feature.

Ps. cxxxii. 11, with Acts ii. 30, that he should be of the family of David. Ps. xlv. 6, 7, with Heb. i. 8, declares his Divine nature. Ps. cxviii. 22, quoted six different times in the New Testament, foretelling his rejection by the Jews. Ps. xxii., his suffering on the cross. Ps. xvi. 9—11, with Acts ii. 27, &c., his resurrection. Ps. lxviii. 18, with Eph. iv. 8, his ascension, and sending the Holy Spirit. Ps. lxxix., with Rom. xi. 9, 10, and Ps. cix. with Acts i. 20, predict

the sore judgments which should befall Judas and the Jewish nation. Ps. cxvii., with Rom. xv. 11, the call of the Gentiles. Ps. lxxii., the final triumph and universal establishment of Messiah's kingdom throughout the earth.

Of the Prophetic Psalms, the most remarkable, as applying throughout and exclusively to Christ, is Ps. cx.

There are "well nigh fifty Psalms quoted several times in the New Testament, which shews how properly our Lord made use of that book to instruct his disciples that He was the Christ (Luke xxiv. 44)."

In some of the Psalms, David utters bitter curses against his enemies. The most remarkable in this respect, are Ps. lxxix. and cix.; but these, as is seen above, Peter applies as prophecies fulfilled in the punishment of Judas and of the Jews. This teaches us how we are to understand the curses contained generally in the Psalms, as threatenings uttered, or judgments foretold, by a Prophet of God, against hardened and finally impenitent sinners; and that the feelings with which we should repeat them, should be an awful sense of God's holiness and justice in the punishment of sin.

The following TABLE, shewing the probable occasion when each Psalm was composed, is abridged from TOWNSEND'S HARMONY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Psalms.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion on which each Psalm was composed.	B.C.
i.....	Nehem. xiii. 3.....	Written by Ezra as a preface to the Book of Psalms	444
ii.....	1 Chron. xvii. 27....	{ On the delivery of the promise by Nathan to David—a prophecy of Christ's kingdom..... }	1044
iii.....	2 Sam. xv. 29.....	On David's flight from Absalom.....	1023
iv.....	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	During the flight from Absalom.....	
v.....	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	During the flight from Absalom.....	
vi.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21....	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
vii.....	2 Sam. xvi. 14.....	On the reproaches of Shimei.....	1023
viii.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21....	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
ix.....	1 Sam. xvii. 4.....	On the victory over Goliath.....	1063
x.....	Dan. vii. 28.....	During the Babylonish captivity.....	539
xi.....	1 Sam. xix. 3.....	When David was advised to flee to the mountains..	1062
xii.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 1....	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
xiii.....	Dan. vii. 28.....	During the Babylonish captivity.....	539
xiv.....			
xv.....			
xvi.....	1 Chron. xvii. 27....	On the delivery of the promise by Nathan to David	1044
xvii.....	1 Sam. xxii. 19.....	On the murder of the priests by Doeg.....	1060
xviii.....	2 Sam. xxii. 51.....	On the conclusion of David's wars.....	1019

Psalms.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion on which each Psalm was composed.	B.C.
xix.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
xx.....	2 Sam. x. 19.....	On the war with the Ammonites and Syrians.....	1035
xxi.....			
xxii.....	1 Chron. xvii. 27.....	On the delivery of the promise by Nathan.....	1044
xxiii.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
xxiv.....			
xxv.....	Dan. vii. 28.....	During the Babylonish captivity.....	539
xxvi.....			
xxvii.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
xxviii.....			
xxix.....	1 Chron. xxi. 30.....	On the dedication of the threshing floor of Araunah.....	1017
xxx.....	1 Sam. xxiii. 12.....	On David's persecution by Saul.....	1060
xxxi.....	2 Sam. xii. 15.....	On the pardon of David's adultery.....	1034
xxxii.....			
xxxiii.....	1 Sam. xxi. 15.....	On David's leaving the city of Gath.....	1060
xxxiv.....	1 Sam. xxii. 19.....	On David's persecution by Doeg.....	1060
xxxv.....	Dan. vii. 28.....	During the Babylonish captivity.....	539
xxxvi.....			
xxxvii.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
xxxviii.....			
xxxix.....	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	On David's flight from Absalom.....	1023
xl.....			
xli.....	2 Kings xix. 7.....	On the blasphemous message of Rabshakeh.....	719
xlii.....			
xliii.....	1 Chron. xvii. 27.....	On the delivery of the promise by Nathan.....	1044
xliiii.....	2 Chron. xx. 26.....	On the victory of Jehoshaphat.....	896
xlv.....	2 Chron. vii. 10.....	On the removal of the ark into the temple.....	1004
xlvii.....	Ezra vi. 22.....	On the dedication of the second temple.....	515
xlviii.....	Dan. vii. 28.....	During the Babylonish captivity.....	539
xlix.....			
l.....	2 Sam. xii. 15.....	Confession of David after his adultery.....	1034
li.....	1 Sam. xxii. 19.....	On David's persecution by Doeg.....	1060
lii.....	Dan. vii. 28.....	During the Babylonish captivity.....	539
liii.....			
liiii.....	1 Sam. xxiii. 23.....	On the treachery of the Zephthi to David.....	1060
liv.....	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	During the flight from Absalom.....	1023
lv.....	1 Sam. xxi. 15.....	When David was with the Philistines in Gath.....	1060
lvi.....	1 Sam. xxiv. 22.....	On David's refusal to kill Saul in the cave.....	1053
lvii.....	1 Sam. xxiv. 22.....	Continuation of Ps lvii.....	1053
lviii.....	1 Sam. xix. 17.....	On Saul surrounding the town of David.....	1061
lix.....	1 Kings xi. 20.....	On the conquest of Edom by Joab.....	1040
lx.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
lxi.....	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	In David's persecution by Absalom.....	1023
lxii.....	1 Sam. xxiv. 22.....	Prayer of David in the wilderness of Engedi.....	1053
lxiii.....	1 Sam. xxii. 19.....	On David's persecution by Saul.....	1060
lxiv.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
lxv.....	Ezra iii. 13.....	On laying the foundation of the second temple.....	535
lxvi.....	Dan. vii. 28.....	During the Babylonish captivity.....	539
lxvii.....	2 Sam. vi. 11.....	On the first removal of the ark.....	1045
lxviii.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
lxix.....	2 Sam. xvii. 29.....	On Absalom's rebellion.....	1023
lxx.....			
lxxi.....	1 Chron. xxix. 19.....	On Solomon being made king by his father.....	1015
lxxii.....	2 Kings xix. 19.....	On the destruction of Sennacherib.....	719
lxxiii.....	Jer. xxxix. 10.....	On the destruction of the city and temple.....	586
lxxiv.....	2 Kings xix. 35.....	On the destruction of Sennacherib.....	719
lxxv.....			
lxxvi.....	Dan. vii. 28.....	During the Babylonish captivity.....	539
lxxvii.....			
lxxviii.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 21.	Inserted towards the end of David's life.....	1015
lxxix.....	Jer. xxxix. 10.....	On the destruction of the city and temple.....	586
lxxx.....	Dan. vii. 28.....	During the Babylonish captivity.....	539
lxxxi.....	Ezra vi. 22.....	On the dedication of the second temple.....	515
lxxxii.....	2 Chron. xix. 7.....	On the appointment of Judges by Jehoshaphat.....	897

On the Book of PROVERBS.

The general design of this book is to instruct especially the young at their entrance into public and active life, — that they may “know wisdom and instruction; perceive the words of understanding; receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment; to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.” (Prov. i. 2—4.)

It is very important to observe, that Solomon, the writer of this book, lays down this rule as the foundation of all his instructions; “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:” thus teaching us there can be no virtue in our intercourse with our fellow creatures, where this is wanting as the motive of action.

We are not, says Bishop Hopkins, generally to expect any connection, either of sense or sentences, in this book of Proverbs. Other parts of Scripture are like a rich mine, where the precious ore runs along in one continued vein; but this is like a heap of pearls, which, though they are loose and unstrung, are not therefore the less excellent and valuable.

This book has however been thus divided into five parts.

Part I., containing the first nine chapters, is a sort of preface—the teacher giving his pupil a connected series of admonitions, cautions, and encouragements to the study of wisdom.

Part II., extending from chap. x. to xxii. 16, comprises what may be strictly called *Proverbs*—namely, unconnected sentences, expressed with much neatness and simplicity.

Part III. reaches from chap. xxii. 17 to xxv. inclusive, in which the tutor renews his connected admonitions to the study of wisdom.

Part IV. contains proverbs supposed to have been selected from some larger collection of Solomon, by the men of Hezekiah—that is, by the Prophets whom he employed to restore the service and writings of the Jewish Church; as Eliakim, and Joah, and Shebna, and probably Hosea, Micah, and even Isaiah. This part, like the second, consists of unconnected sentences, and extends from chap. xxv. to xxix.

Part V. consists of the last two chapters; the first of

which contains the wise observations and instructions delivered by Agut to his pupils Ithiel and Ucal; and the other the excellent lessons addressed to king Lemuel by his mother.

With regard to the interpretation of proverbs, it is important to remark, that not unfrequently that is expressed without any limitation which yet is to be understood as generally, but not universally, true. Thus,—

Prov. x. 15. The destruction of the poor is their poverty; exposing men to injuries and abuses. But sometimes poverty is a protection, as appears in the tremendous judgment inflicted on the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxv. 9); where, we are told, he burnt every great man's house, taking all that had property captive, but leaving (see ver. 12) the poor of the land to be vinedressers, &c.

Prov. x. 27. The fear of the Lord longeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. This is true, as a general remark, that piety contributes both to the enjoyment and length of life; but Abel was murdered, and Cain's life prolonged. Abijah (1 Kings xiv. 13—17) meets an early death, and his wicked father's life is prolonged to a reign of twenty-two years. Pious Jonathan and apostate Saul perish in the same battle; "the corn is cut down with the weeds, but to a better purpose." God inflicts some judgments here to show he governs the world, but not in all instances to shew that he will judge it.

Prov. xi. 15. He that hateth suretyships is sure (see also xvii. 18); but this is not a condemnation of suretyships under any circumstances, but a strong mode of warning against becoming so rashly.

Prov. xvi. 7. When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.—Under the Old Testament dispensation, to which temporal prosperity was more immediately annexed as the reward of obedience, this was, as a general truth, remarkably illustrated in the history of the Israelites (Exod. xxxiv. 24), Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Asa, &c.

Yet, though David's ways pleased the Lord, Saul was never at peace with him, and this applies with still more force to the enemies of David's son and David's Lord. The Apostle also warns Timothy that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. iii. 12). Yet

there is that in the meekness and love of Christian character which tends to conciliate, and God not unfrequently does overrule them to this end.

Prov. xviii. 22. Whoso findeth, &c.—Manoah found it so (Judges xiii. 23); but Ahab did not (1 Kings xxi. 25), nor Job (ch. ii. 10).

The foregoing remarks suggest a valuable hint for the more profitable reading of the Proverbs; namely, to illustrate the general truths contained in them, by examples from the historical parts of the Old and New Testament. Thus, Prov. xix. 3, Cain; xi. 8, Daniel, Mordecai; xviii. 6. xv. 10, Amaziah; xi. 2, Uzziah, Nebuchadnezzar; xii. 19, Gehazi (see also page 170, Jeroboam).

This book, though chiefly serving as a guide to our intercourse with our fellow creatures, yet gives those views of the nature and consequences of sin (see xvi. 5; xxi. 4; xxiv. 9; i. 24, &c.), which strongly imply our need of the office of the Son as our Saviour, and of the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier, whose influences we are especially encouraged to pray for (i. 23); and through whose teaching we shall be made partakers of that wisdom which is treasured up in Christ (viii. 22, with John i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 24—30), and which can alone guide us through this life to heaven.

On the Book of ECCLESIASTES.

The great subject of this book is "happiness," and its chief object is to *correct* one of the commonest of all delusions, and one of the most fatal, that of supposing the things of this world are sufficient for our happiness, and pursuing them as our chief good; and also to *direct* us to true happiness, namely, by fearing God and keeping his commandments (ch. i. 2. xii. 13).

This book was evidently written by Solomon (i. 12. 16. with ii. 4—9. xii. 9, 10); and is generally considered as a penitential discourse, composed a little before his death to warn others by his own sad experience, of the vanity of all created things, and especially of the misery of sin, both here and hereafter. Let the young, learning from it the guilt and danger of yielding to the imaginations of their hearts (xi. 9), remember their Creator in the days of their youth (xii. 1, &c.); old age, even if they reach it, being a

very unfit season to begin so infinitely important a concern as the salvation of the soul.

Use temporal things, but desire eternal. To seek God is, to desire happiness—to find him is that happiness.—*Augustine.*

On the SONG of SOLOMON.

This represents, under a mystical allegory, the mutual love of Christ and his Church, under the endearing relation of a bridegroom and his bride.

It was the practice of the Jews, to forbid their children the reading of this book till their judgment was sufficiently matured, lest in the fervour of youth, they should give too wide a scope to fancy, and interpret to a bad sense the spiritual ideas of Solomon—a prudent and judicious precaution.

Yet it is justly entitled a Song of Songs, or most excellent song, as being superior to any that an uninspired writer could have produced, and tending, if properly understood, to purify the mind, and raise the affections from earthly to heavenly things (see Dr. Gray).

For the use of similar figures in other parts of Scripture, see Ps. xlv. ; Jer. iii. 12—14 ; Hos. ii. 14—23 ; Matt. ix. 15. xxii. 2. xxv. 1—11 ; John iii. 29 ; 2 Cor. xi. 2 ; Eph. v. 23—27 ; Rev. xix. 7—9. xxi. 2—9. xxii. 17.

§ 4. THE PROPHETS.

Prophecy is interwoven with the whole fabric of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, but this part is distinguished from the other parts of the Old Testament by the name of the Prophets, partly because, though history is slightly introduced (as Isa. xxxvi.—xxxix. &c.), its leading subject is prophecy ; and partly because, in the progress of God's revelation to man, these writings hold, in the gradual development of evangelical truth, an intermediate place between the law and the Gospel (Luke xvi. 16).

This division of the Old Testament consists of four greater Prophets ; viz., *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah* (including the Lamentations, a kind of Appendix to his prophecy), *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*, and twelve minor Prophets ; viz., *Hosea*, *Joel*,

Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

This distinction of the prophets into Greater and Less, alludes to the size of their books, and not in any measure to their authority or importance. They are all, as Bp. Horsley remarks, but parts of an entire work of a single author, the Holy Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will; and the remark, from its great importance, may be repeated, that the several books of the prophets are not predictions of separate and independent events, but are united in a regular and entire system, all terminating in one great object—the promulgation of the Gospel, and the complete establishment of the Messiah's kingdom (see Rev. xix, 10, and Bp. Horsley's Sermon on 2 Pet. i. 20, 21).

A consideration of the fact, that the prophets were raised up not only by their predictions to prepare for the coming of the Messiah, but also as *preachers* to their respective generations, will throw light on the scope of their writings, which may be thus generally described as containing:—

1. *Denunciations of judgment*, with a notice of the sins which were the cause of it.

In this point of view, they throw great light on the Historical Books of the Old Testament considered as a religious history: (that is) a history of the moral character, rather than the political relations of the Jews as a nation.

2. *Exhortations to repentance*; from which we may gather motives to repentance.

3. *Comfort to the truly pious* (in the midst of all the judgments denounced against the wicked); with prophetic promises of the Messiah. These promises encouraged them to look beyond the miseries around them to the joyful and eternal deliverance which, in the fulness of time, he should bring. For it may be remarked, that these prophets confine not themselves to the first coming of Christ, but “as if impatient to be confined to so narrow bounds, they overflow, as it were, into the more distant future, and expatiate on the principal facts of his second coming.” How deeply interesting is it to us thus to see, that faith in Christ has been the great support of the true servant of God in every age of the Church.

The Prophetic Books may be thus arranged according to the order of time in which they were written:—

1. Before the fearful judgment of } Jonah, Amos, Hosea,
the captivity of the ten tribes by } Joel, Isaiah, and
Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. } Micah.
2. Between that and the seventy } Nahum, Zephaniah,
years' captivity of Judah in } Jeremiah, Habak-
Babylon. } kuk, Obadiah.
3. During this captivity. { Jeremiah, Ezekiel,
Daniel.
4. After this captivity. { Haggai, Zechariah,
Malachi.

In all occupying a period of about 400 years, beginning about 600 years after the giving of the law at Sinai, and ending about 400 years before the coming of Christ.

If in these four periods we parallel the prophetic writings with the historical books written during the same times, they will materially illustrate each other. For an example of this, see page 174.

On the Book of the Prophet ISAIAH.

B. C. BETWEEN 810 AND 698.

The name of Isaiah is very descriptive of that which distinguishes his writings, and which probably is the cause of his being placed first in the order of the prophets, though others wrote before him. Isaiah means "salvation of Jehovah;" and so pre-eminently is this the leading subject of his book, that he has been called the Evangelical Prophet.

The contents of this book may be divided into Six Parts:—

Part I.—Contains a general description of the state and condition of the Jews in the several periods of their history; the promulgation and success of the Gospel, and the coming of the Messiah to judgment (ch. i—v). These predictions were delivered during the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah.

Part II.—Comprises the predictions delivered in the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz (ch. vi—xii).

Part III.—Contains various predictions against the Babylonians, Assyrians, Philistines, and other nations with whom the Jews had any intercourse (xiii—xxiii).

Part IV.—Contains a prophecy of the great calamities that should befall the people of God, his merciful preservation of a remnant of them, and of their restoration to their own country, of their conversion to the Gospel, and the destruction of Antichrist (ch. xxiv—xxxv).

Part V.—Comprises the historical part of the prophecy of Isaiah (ch. xxxvi—xxxix). The invasion of Sennacherib, and the destruction of his army in answer to Hezekiah's prayer—Hezekiah's sickness, miraculous recovery, and prolongation of life fifteen years.

Part VI.—xl—lxvi. Comprises a series of prophecies delivered towards the close of Hezekiah's reign. The chief subject is, the restoration of the Church. The redemption of Babylon is employed as an image, to shadow out a redemption of an infinitely higher nature; the Prophet so connecting these two events, as scarcely ever to treat of the former without introducing some allusion to the latter.

The following references will show, that the Prophet seems to have been favoured with an entire view of the Gospel state, from the very birth of the Messiah, to that glorious period when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of God and his Christ.

The divine nature of Christ (vii. 14. ix. 6); his human descent (xi. 1); threefold character of Prophet (xlii. 1. 6, 7. xlix. 1, &c. lv. 4, 5); Priest (liii. 10); King (ix. 6, 7. xxxii. 1, 2); his coming to be proclaimed by the Baptist (xl. 3, 4, with Matt. iii. 3, &c.); appointment to preach (lxi. 1, 2); miracles (xxxv. 5); rejection of his personal ministry (vi. 9—12, with Matt. xiii. 14. liii. 3); sufferings for our sins (l. 6. liii. 4—11); death, burial, with remarkable circumstances attending it (liii. 10—12); victory over the grave (xxv. 8. liii. 10—12). The Jews rejected (lxv. 2—7); the call of the Gentile world (xlix. 5—12. lxv. 1); increase and perfection of his kingdom (ix. 7. xi. 4—10. lix. 16, &c.).

The office of the Holy Spirit is also noticed (lxiii. 10, 11. 14); they rebelled, &c. referring to the Israelites in the wilderness; while xxxii. 15. xxxv. 6. xlv. 3, show, that the full manifestation of his office and influence was reserved for the times of the Gospel.

In reading this and every other book of the Prophets, particular attention should be paid in observing the sins

which peculiarly called forth the indignation of God, that we may avoid them. Thus, besides the grosser sins of bloodshed, oppression, &c., may be noticed covetousness (v. 8); confounding the distinctions between right and wrong (v. 20); self-conceit (v. 21); disregard of God's providence (v. 12. **xxix.** 15. **xxii.** 13); a heart intoxicated with success, and giving itself up to worldly pleasure (xlvii. 8). So also the evil of pride in Babylon (xiv. 13); Moab (xvi. 6); Tyre (**xxiii.** 9); Ephraim (**xxviii.** 3); Shebna (**xxii.** 16); Sennacherib (**xxxvii.** 23); and the blessing of humility (lvii. 15); are very observable. "Human philosophy thought humility incompatible with other virtues; the Bible declares all other virtues to be vices and defects without it."

On the Book of the Prophet JEREMIAH.

B.C. BETWEEN 628 AND 586.

The Book of Jeremiah differs from that of Isaiah, in this respect: that while it was the leading object of Isaiah to attempt the reformation of the Jews, the awful nature of Jeremiah's message was, to proclaim the near desolation of his country now hardened in impenitence. This gives a peculiar feature both to his character and writings, which has led to his being called the weeping Prophet (see ch. ix. 1). His name translated is, "He shall exalt Jehovah;" and his whole life was spent in endeavouring to promote God's glory.

Jeremiah was a priest set apart to the prophetic office from his birth, and expressly addressed by the word of God at the early age of fourteen years. He was called to his office nearly at the same time with Zephaniah, in the thirteenth year of Josiah, and continued to exercise it above forty years, during the reigns of the wicked sons of that pious king. He was suffered to remain in Judea when Zedekiah and the nation generally were carried away captive by Nebuchadnezer; but after the murder of Gedaliah, the governor whom Nebuchadnezer had placed in Judea in the room of Zedekiah, Jeremiah was forced by his countrymen to retire with them into Egypt, where, according to the account of St. Jerome, he was stoned to death, for his

bold reproof of their iniquities. In his character is presented a bright example of the strictest fidelity in reproving sin with the deepest compassion for the sinner.

His predictions are not arranged in this book as they were delivered. The following order may be adopted, for the sake of classing them more nearly according to their dates :

Part I. The prophecies delivered in the reign of the good king Josiah, containing ch. i—xii. inclusive.

(During the short reign of Shallum or Jehoahaz his second son, who succeeded Josiah—no prophecies.)

Part II. The prophecies delivered in the reign of Jehoia-kim, the eldest son of Josiah, comprising ch. xiii—xx. xxii. xxiii. xxv. xxvi. xlv—xlviii. xlix. 1—33.

(During the short reigns of Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin, or Coniah, the son and successor of Jehoia-kim—no prophecies.)

Part III. The prophecies delivered in the reign of Zedekiah, the uncle of Jeconiah, youngest son of Josiah, and the last of the kings of Judah, including ch. xxi. xxiv. xxvii. —xxxiv. xxxvii.—xxxix. xlix. 34—39 ; l. li.

Part IV. The prophecies delivered in the government of Gedaliah, from the taking of Jerusalem to the retreat of the people into Egypt, and the prophecies of Jeremiah, delivered to the Jews in that country, comprehending ch. xl—xliv. inclusive.

(Ch. lii. was added after Jeremiah's death. It is a short historical account of the taking of Jerusalem. See 2 Kings xxv. 18—20.)

Besides the destruction of Babylon, and the downfall of many other nations alluded to by Isaiah, Jeremiah foretels the precise time of the Babylonish captivity, ch. xxv. 12.

Of the prophecies in this book more immediately pointing to Christ, the following may be noticed :—

Ch. xxiii. 5, 6, foretels the mediatorial kingdom of the Messiah, who is called the Lord, or Jehovah our righteousness. The title of Jehovah is elsewhere given to the Messiah by the prophets. (See Isa. xl. 10 ; xlviii. 17 ; Hosea i. 7 ; Mal. iii. 1.)

Ch. xxxi. 31—34 ; xxxiii. 8, clearly and forcibly describe the efficacy of Christ's atonement, the spiritual character of the Gospel, and that it gives not only pardon but holiness. (Compare Heb. viii. 8—13, and x. 14, &c.)

For the first fulfilment of the prophecies respecting the return of the Jews, read Ezra and Nehemiah.

On the Book of the LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

The Lamentations of Jeremiah are composed after the manner of funeral hymns. They express with most pathetic tenderness his grief for the desolation of Jerusalem, the captivity of Judah, the miseries of famine, the cessation of all religious worship, and the various other calamities by which his countrymen had been visited, agreeably to his prediction.

His leading object is to teach his countrymen neither to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor to faint when they were rebuked of Him, but, turning to God with deep repentance, look to Him alone for deliverance. It is a book suited to those under affliction; particularly ch. iii.

When we consider the ill treatment Jeremiah received from his countrymen, the spirit of the writer is a striking testimony to the inspiration under which he wrote. He that thus dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him, 1 John iv. 12. 16.

On the Book of the Prophet EZEKIEL.

B. C. BETWEEN 595 AND 536.

Ezekiel was, like Jeremiah, a priest as well as a prophet. He was among the first of the captives carried by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon with Jehoiachin king of Judah, and his ministry was to his captive countrymen, among whom he prophesied for about twenty-one years. They not seeing immediately fulfilled the prophecies of Jeremiah, in the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, considered their own condition to be far worse than that of their brethren who yet remained in Judea. Ezekiel, therefore,

1. Describes, in confirmation of Jeremiah's prophecies, the calamities about to arise in Judea, attributing them to the same cause, the wickedness of its inhabitants.

2. Reproves his captive countrymen for their murmuring and continued impenitence; yet,

3. Invites them to repentance, with the prospect of the fulfilment of God's promises to them in the destruction of those enemies who were insulting over their afflictions; promising their restoration, and interspersing these assurances with prophetic declarations of the coming of the Messiah, and of the spiritual blessings he would communicate.

On the moral intention of the obscurity of his prophecies, written in the gloom of captivity, it has been remarked, that it appears to have been God's design to cheer the drooping spirits of his people, but only by communicating such encouragement as was consistent with a state of punishment, and calculated, by indistinct intimations of future blessings, to awaken repentance, and keep alive a watchful and submissive confidence.

His prophecies and character are marked by a peculiar energy, of which his name is expressive: Ezekiel meaning, "the power of God girding with strength."

His writings may be divided into four parts.

Part I. Contains the glorious appearance of God to the prophet, and his solemn appointment to his office, with instructions and encouragement for the discharge of it. ch. i—iii.

Part II. Denunciations against the Jewish people, foretelling the total destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, and occasionally predicting another period of yet greater desolation, and more general dispersion. ch. iv.—xxiv.

Part III. Comprises prophecies against various neighbouring nations, enemies to and oppressors of the Jews. ch. xxv.—xxxii.

Part IV. Contains a series of warnings, exhortations, and promises, to the Jews, of future deliverance under Cyrus, but principally of their final restoration and conversion under the kingdom of Messiah (ch. xxxiii.—xlvi.)

Among the many topics which may be noticed in this book, are the self-denial and suffering to which Ezekiel was called in the discharge of his office (iv.; xxiv. 15, 16), and yet his ardent love for his countrymen (ix. 8; xi. 13); the wickedness of the Jews at Jerusalem, immediately before their destruction, particularly illustrated by the conduct of Pelatiah, and his awful death, producing no change in their conduct (xi. 1. 13); the deceit they practised

on themselves in the commission of sin (viii. 12; ix. 9); disobedience to parents, profaning the sabbath (xxii. 7), noticed among the sins which brought upon them God's wrath. The treatment of Ezekiel's ministry by the Jews in captivity (xxxiii. 30—32); the conduct of the Jews in Judea, after the destruction of Jerusalem (xxxiii. 21—24), instead of being awed by so terrible a visitation, persisting in the same sins, and confidently hoping to be enriched by the ruin of their brethren. These are views of human nature given by the Holy Spirit for our admonition.

The vision of the dry bones, setting forth the restoration of the people of Israel, illustrates to us the only means by which our nature can be raised from a death in sin to a life of righteousness (xxxvii. with Ephesians i. 19, &c.; ii. 1). But let us remember, that though God works in us to will and to do (Phil. ii. 13), we must seek his grace by *sincere* prayer (ch. xxxvi. 26, 27. 37). The elders of Israel, regarding iniquity in their hearts, were not heard (ch. xiv. 1—4, with Ps. lxvi. 18).

Of the prophecies respecting the Messiah and his kingdom, may be particularly noticed—

Ch. xxxiv. 23. and xxxviii. 24. Prophecy of Christ as the Shepherd styled David, as being the person in whom all the promises made to David are fulfilled.

Ch. xlvii. The vision of the holy waters issuing out of the temple, and their virtue (1—12), a most beautiful emblem of the gradual progress of the Gospel, and of the influences of the Holy Spirit accompanying it.

On the Book of the Prophet DANIEL.

B. C. BETWEEN 606 AND 534.

Daniel was not, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, a priest, but, like Isaiah, of the tribe of Judah, and a descendant of the kings of Judah. He was carried to Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah, in the year B. C. 606 (*i. e.* eight years before Ezekiel), and probably about the eighteenth year of his age. He was placed in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and was afterwards raised to great rank and power in the empire, both of Babylon and Persia, enemies to each other, but agreeing to honour him (Prov.

xxj. 1). He died at a very advanced age, having prophesied during the whole period of the seventy years' captivity. His last vision respecting the succession of the kings of Persia was written in his ninetieth year, and the third year of the reign of Cyrus. His eminence for wisdom and piety, even in early life, appears from Ezekiel xiv. 14—20, and xxviii. 3. to have been almost proverbial; and this book shows he preserved that eminence to its close, amidst the greatest temptations of deepest adversity and most exalted prosperity.

This book may be divided into two parts.

Part I. Ch. i—vi. is chiefly historical: comprising the education of Daniel and his three friends, their advancement and trials issuing in their greater honour; the punishment of Nebuchadnezzar and the fall of Babylon.

Part II. Ch. vii—xii. comprises various prophecies respecting the four great monarchies of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome—to be succeeded by the establishment of Christianity; the division of the empire of Alexander into four kingdoms, and of the Roman into ten less kingdoms. The persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes; the desolation of Jerusalem, and of the sanctuary; the power and destruction of Antichrist. Distinct assurance of the resurrection of the just and the unjust (xii. 2—3).

Of the prophecies more particularly referring to the person and office of Christ, the following are very observable:

Ch. iii. 25. vii. 13. his divine and human nature: (ix. 24. 26) his atonement, stating the exact time when he would thus make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.

Chap. vii. 13, 14, unfolds the scene when, on our Lord's ascension from the grave, he should appear coming in clouds to the Father, to receive dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve him. See Matt. xxviii. 18; Acts i. 9; ii. 34; vii. 56; Eph. i. 20—22; Phil. ii. 9—11; Heb. i. 3; Rev. xix. 16.—*Gray.*

Much may often be learned by observing the occasions when prophecies were delivered. Thus the glorious display of the great work of redemption was made to Daniel when

in the act of prayer, deeply bewailing his sin. Ch. ix. 4, 21, &c. with Isa. lvii. 15.

The book of Daniel was written in the darkness of the most terrible captivity the Church had ever suffered (Ps. cxxxvii.) "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof." But then "the harp of prophecy was most inspired with hope, then the grandest revelations were made of the future glories of the Church, of the providence of God controlling all events for her good."—See *Davison on Prophecy*; particularly in reference to the adaptation of prophecy to the exigencies of religion.

The prophecies of this book, extending from the first establishment of the Persian empire, more than 500 years before Christ, to the general resurrection, afford an unanswerable proof that the Bible is the word of God (Isa. xli. 9, 10). They show moreover, that (to use an expression of Bishop Butler), the world is God's world (Ps. lxxv. 7); that God is the Judge; He putteth down one and setteth up another; and that the manifestation of His glory, in the salvation of man, is the great purpose He is carrying on in it (ch. ii. 35; ix. 24). How important the inquiry to every man, whether he is making the glory of God and the salvation of his soul the governing principles of his life?

The wisdom of God in overruling the punishment of the Jews to the spread of the knowledge of Himself among the Gentiles, is very striking. Their seventy years' captivity in Babylon, and the miraculous events recorded in this book, would prove before the world, what Nebuchadnezzar (iii. 28. iv. 34.) and Darius (vi. 26.) were forced to acknowledge, that the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the God of Daniel, was the living God, the great King above all gods. See also Ezra i. 2. with regard to Cyrus.

On the Book of the Prophet HOSEA.

B. C. BETWEEN 810 AND 725.

Hosea was contemporary with Isaiah, and began to prophesy a little before him (compare Isa. i. 1. and Hosea i. 1). But whereas Isaiah touches frequently on the history

of surrounding nations, and prophesied chiefly to Judah. Hosea does not refer to other nations, and prophesied almost exclusively to the ten tribes, whom he addresses not only under the title of Israel, but of Ephraim and Samaria, because Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes of Israel, was of the tribe of Ephraim, and Samaria was the royal city. The great sin of that king, in having set up the calves at Dan and Bethel, uninterruptedly persisted in during the course of 150 years, had spread every form of vice among priests and people; and though, when Hosea began to prophesy in the reign of Jeroboam the second, there was great outward prosperity, iniquity was fast working their ruin. Hosea, therefore, in the strongest terms points out their guilt and danger, using the strong figures of adultery and whoredom to reprove their idolatry, which implied the violation of their covenant with, and the alienation of their affections from God, and in the most earnest manner calls them to repentance; showing how vain was their dependence on other nations, and their pursuit of happiness in departure from God: they were sowing the wind, and would reap the whirlwind. He laboured more than sixty years, but with very little success, and probably lived to see his awful threatenings executed in the captivity of the ten tribes. A bright example, in the midst of an adulterous and sinful generation, of persevering fidelity under the greatest discouragements.

The principal prophecies contained in this book are—the captivity and dispersion of the kingdom of Israel (v. 5. 7. ix. 3. 6—11. x. 5 and 6. xiii. 16); the deliverance of Judah from Sennacherib, figurative of salvation by Christ (i. 7, with 2 Kings xix. 35); the present destitute state of the Jews (iii. 4); their future restoration and union with the Gentiles in the kingdom of the Messiah (i. 10, 11. iii. 5, with Rom. ix. 24. 26); the call of our Saviour out of Egypt (xi. 1, with Matt. ii. 15); his resurrection on the third day (vi. 2, with 1 Cor. xv. 4); and the assurance of a final ransom to his people from the power of death and the grave, celebrated in loftiest strains of triumph and exultation (xiii. 14, with 1 Cor. xv. 55).

Repentance and faith, being the daily duty of every Christian (ch. vi. xiii. xiv), will be found particularly useful to awaken and cherish such a state of mind. May each of

us learn what is here enforced by God upon Israel, "thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help" (xiii. 9).

On the Book of the Prophet JOEL.

B. C. BETWEEN 810 AND 660.

Joel is supposed to have delivered his prophecies soon after Hosea had commenced his ministry. As Hosea's were addressed to the ten tribes, so were Joel's to Judah. He sets forth with peculiar force the terrible judgments threatened against them, exhorts to repentance, fasting, and prayer, promising the favour of God to those who should be obedient.

The principal prophecies contained in this Book are—the Chaldean invasion, under the figure of locusts, &c. (i. 4, &c.); the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus (ii. 30, &c. with Matt. xxiv. 29; Luke xxi. 11).

The blessings of the Gospel dispensation, foretelling in clearest terms the general outpouring of the Holy Spirit which was to characterise it (ii. 28—32, with Acts ii. 17. 21); the conversion and restoration of the Jews to their own land, the destruction of the enemies of God, and the glorious state of the Christian Church, which is to follow it. (iii).—See *Tomline*.

Joel is generally supposed to have lived in the reign of Uzziah, and to have predicted the overthrow of Judah by the Chaldeans, at the time when Uzziah, confiding in his military power, "his heart was lifted up to his destruction" (2 Chron. xxvi. 16).

On the Book of the Prophet AMOS.

B. C. BETWEEN 810 AND 785.

Amos was a herdsman and a gatherer of Sycamore fruit (vii. 14); not having had any regular education in the schools of the Prophets, but the Holy Spirit called him as he followed the flock (vii. 14, 15, with 2 Pet. i. 21). He who "selects his ministers as well from the tents of the shepherd, as from the palace of the sovereign," qualifying him for the duties to which He called him (1 Cor. i. 27. 29).

Amos was contemporary with Hosea, and, like him,

directed his prophecies chiefly to the ten tribes of Israel, though not so exclusively; as he denounces judgments also against Judah, and threatens the kingdoms that bordered on Palestine; as the Syrians, Philistines, Tyrians, Edomites, Ammonites, and Moabites. He foretels, in clear terms, the captivity of the ten tribes, and the awful calamities attending it (viii. 8—13); concluding with assurances, that God would not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, but after sifting, as it were, and cleansing it, among the nations, He would raise it again to more than its former splendour and happiness in the kingdom of the Messiah, by the accession of Gentile subjects (ix. 11—15, with Acts xv. 16).

No Prophet has more magnificently described the Deity, more gravely rebuked the luxurious, or reproved injustice and oppression, with greater warmth or more generous indignation.—*Dr. Gray, Abp. Newcome.*

On the Book of the Prophet OBADIAH.

B. C. BETWEEN 588 AND 583.

Obadiah probably lived about the same time with Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and delivered his prophecy soon after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

It denounces the utter destruction of the Edomites or Idumæans, the descendants of profane Esau, who, proud of their wisdom, and of their fancied security among the clefts of the rock, had rejoiced at the destruction of, and insulted the children of Judah in their affliction, though descendants of Jacob, the brother of Esau. From their doom we may learn, how hateful are such dispositions in the sight of God: "He that is not concerned that his brother should not perish, is in great danger of perishing himself." The people of God, though chastened, the Prophet assures us, shall not be finally cast off, and that the great Redeemer, whom preceding saviours had foreshown, shall reign over every enemy (ver. 21, with Rev. xi. 15. xix. 6).

A profitable exercise to the young, would be to compare the different predictions uttered by different prophets against the same nation. Thus, in this instance: Isa. xxxiv. 5, 6. 13; Jer. xlix. 13; Ezekiel xxxv. 7, &c. Idumæa is

now, and has been for the last 1000 years as there described, an awful warning of the guilt of vain-glory, and that pride goeth before destruction.

On the Book of the Prophet JONAH.

B. C. BETWEEN 856 AND 784.

Two remarkable circumstances characterize this book :—
First.—That though Jonah be placed fifth in the order of the minor prophets, he is generally considered as the most ancient of all the prophets whose writings we possess. He is thought by some to have lived in the beginning of the reign of Jehoahaz, when Hazeel, by his cruel treatment of Israel, was verifying the predictions of Elisha (2 Kings viii. 12. x. 32. xiii. 22). He is mentioned, 2 Kings xiv. 25.

Secondly.—That he here appears as a Prophet to the Gentiles. The subject of this book, which is chiefly narrative, is Jonah's mission to Nineveh, a city equally distinguished for its magnificence and corruption. It may be thus divided :—

Ch. i. ii. relate the *first* mission of Jonah, his disobedience, and punishment.

Ch. iii. iv. the *second* mission—his success, and yet his discontent.

Very instructive views of the character of God are given in this book. His long-suffering to sinners, in sparing the Ninevites on their repentance; the tenderness with which, while he chastened, he bore with his servant Jonah; His overruling Jonah's punishment as a sign to the Ninevites; the miracle attending that punishment, proving his Divine mission. Thus does God bring good out of evil. Did Jonah, when fleeing from the presence of the Lord, find a ship ready to take him to Tarshish? This shows us we must never so interpret the events of God's providence, as to imagine they will justify us in a departure from his word.

Much also of the character of man, his depravity and inconsistency, appears in Jonah's disobedient conduct under reproof. His prayer expresses deep repentance.

Yet again we are called to notice his discontent and proud repining at that mercy being extended to others, of

which he had been so lately so distinguished a monument (ch. iv. with Job vii. 17).

This book also contains a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ. The time of Jonah's continuance in the belly of the fish, was a type of our Lord's continuance in the grave (Luke xi. 30—32). Thus (as Davison remarks), in the first and oldest of the prophets, we perceive that the first image, the introductory representation, which meets us in the opening of the prophetic canon when we explore it in a Christian sense, is that of the great fact of Christ's resurrection.

On the Book of the Prophet MICAH.

B. C. BETWEEN 758 AND 699.

Micah prophesied in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, contemporary with whom were Pekah and Hoshea, the two last kings of Israel. He began to prophesy a little after Isaiah, confirming his predictions both against Judah and Israel, urging to repentance both by threatened judgments and promised mercies. One of his predictions is related to have saved the life of Jeremiah (iii. 12, with Jer. xxvi. 18—24). He foretels, in clear terms, the invasion of Shalmanezzer (i. 6—8; 2 Kings xvii. 4. 6); and that of Sennacherib (i. 9—16; 2 Kings xviii. 13); the cessation of prophecy (iii. 6, 7); the utter destruction of Jerusalem (iii. 12) by Vespasian; yet, for the encouragement of the pious, he also predicts the destruction of Assyria, the representative of the enemies of the Christian Church (vii. 8. 10); the promulgation of the Gospel from Mount Zion, its beneficial effects (iv. 1—8, with Isa. ii. 2—4), and particularly the birth-place of Christ, his divine nature "whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting" (v. 2, with Matt. ii. 6; John vii. 42); and the exaltation of his kingdom over all nations (iv. 2. 7, and Luke i. 33. See also v. 5; comp. with Eph. ii. 14, Mic. vii. 20, with Luke i. 73).

In illustration of the spirit of love which distinguishes the writers of the Bible, as referred to, page 12, observe, ch. i. 8, the deep sorrow of the Prophet, on account of the calamities which he foretels, and how he tempers his denunciations of judgment with promises of mercy (vii. 18).

On the Book of the Prophet NAHUM.

B. C. BETWEEN 720 AND 698.

This book is a striking illustration of the moral use of prophecy; that the prophecies of Scripture are not mere anticipations of the future, but so given as to strengthen for present duty, by confirming the faith of the true believer.

Nahum probably prophesied between the period when Shalmaneser carried Israel captive into Assyria, and when Sennacherib was meditating the destruction of Jerusalem. At this period of perplexity and distress, when the fate of Samaria was present to the apprehension of Judah, when her own cities had been taken by Sennacherib, and Hezekiah had drained his treasure, and even despoiled the temple, in the vain hope of turning away the fury of Sennacherib (2 Kings xviii. 16); then was Nahum, whose name signifies "comforter," raised up in consolation to Judah, to proclaim destruction to him that imagineth evil against the Lord (i. 11, &c.) See Dr. Gray.

His prophecy is one entire poem, which opens with a sublime description of the justice and power of God tempered with long-suffering (i. 1—8), and foretells the destruction of Sennacherib's forces, and the subversion of the Assyrian empire (9—12), together with the deliverance of Hezekiah, and the death of Sennacherib (13—15). The destruction of Nineveh is then predicted, and described in the most glowing colours, and with singular minuteness, which profane history confirms to have been exactly fulfilled (ii. iii.)

The book of Nahum will be best understood (remarks Davison), by being read as a continuation or supplement to the book of Jonah. The prophecy of both is directed against Nineveh. They form connected parts of one moral history; the remission of God's judgments being illustrated in the one—the execution of it in the other (see 2 Peter ii. 21).

On the Book of the Prophet HABAKKUK.

B. C. BETWEEN 612 AND 598.

Habakkuk probably prophesied in the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, in the time of Jeremiah, a few years before the captivity of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar.

Of all the nations that had most afflicted the Jews, and in them the Church of God, the chief were—the Edomites—the Assyrians—the Chaldæans; and three of the prophets were raised up on purpose to pronounce the destruction of each of these nations. Obadiah, that of the Edomites; Nahum, that of the Assyrians, who had carried the ten tribes into captivity; and now Habakkuk, that of the Chaldæans, who completed the captivity of the remaining tribes.

This book remarkably breathes a spirit of prayer. Holy indignation at the iniquity of his countrymen, with earnest intercession for their welfare: The concluding prayer, in which Habakkuk describes the wonders God had wrought for Israel in times past, was admirably calculated to inspire the pious among them with confidence, in the prospect of their approaching calamity, the destruction of Jerusalem, and their captivity in Babylon.

We may observe (ch. ii. 3, 4), the great principle which forms the character of the true servant of God in every age—a passage quoted three times in the New Testament (Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 37, 38; see also Heb. xi.; Gal. ii. 20). This principle will enable us, like Habakkuk (iii. 17), to joy even in tribulation (Rom. v. 1—3).

On the Book of the Prophet ZEPHANIAH.

B. C. BETWEEN 640 AND 609.

Zephaniah was contemporary with Jeremiah, and prophesied with the same object, to declare that the great day of trouble, distress, desolation, and darkness, was at hand in the approaching captivity of Judah (i. 15), to point out the sins which were the causes of it. He denounces God's wrath against the nations which assisted in or rejoiced over the calamities of the Jews after their captivity in Babylon; he

declares their present dispersion and ultimate conversion when the name of God, through them, shall be glorified throughout the world.

He describes the desolation of Nineveh with remarkable accuracy (ii. 14, 15). Compare also iii. 10, with Acts viii. 27.

Zephaniah prophesied in the *early* part of Josiah's reign; assisting him in his zealous effort of bringing back the people to the worship and obedience of the true God.

We are now brought to the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who flourished after the return of the Jews from Babylon; and their predictions (as Davison remarks) are confined almost entirely to two subjects:—1. The re-establishment of the Hebrew people and their temple;—2. The annunciation of the Gospel.

On the Book of the Prophet HAGGAI.

B. C. ABOUT 520 TO 518.

Haggai is generally reputed to have been born in the captivity, and to have returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel (Ezra ii. 2). He is the first of the three prophets who flourished among the Jews after their return to their country; and appears to have been raised up by God to exhort Zerubbabel (Ezra v. 1.) and Joshua the High-priest, to resume the work of the temple, which had been interrupted nearly fourteen years, by the Samaritans and others artfully attempting to defeat the edict of Cyrus (Ezra iv. 24). But now that these hindrances were removed, the Jews had become lukewarm, more solicitous to build and adorn their own houses than to labour in the service of God. He continued prophesying about four months, and his earnest remonstrance, appears to have had the desired effect (Ezra vi. 14).

Of the prophecies more immediately relating to the Messiah and his kingdom, are—

Ch. ii. 7—9; foretelling that the glory of the second temple, though much inferior as a building, should be greater than that of the first. This was fulfilled by our Blessed Lord, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead

bodily (Col. ii. 9), honouring it with his presence and preaching.

Ch. ii. 20—23, also predicts the important revolutions which would precede the great and final coming of the Messiah, typically described under the name of Zerubbabel, when the kingdoms of the world would become subject to his chosen servant (see Dan. ii. 44; Rev. xi. 15). The grandeur of this event was perhaps fore-shadowed in the temporal commotions which happened before the first coming of our Saviour, the subversion of the Persian monarchy by the Grecian, and that by the Romans, and in the terrible destruction of Jerusalem, and the ruin of the civil government of the Jews shortly after his ascension.

On the Book of the Prophet ZECHARIAH.

B. C. FROM 520 TO 518. OR LONGER.

Zechariah began to prophesy about two months after Haggai, in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, and continued to prophesy about two years. He had the same general object with Haggai, to encourage and urge the Jews to rebuild the temple, and restore its public ordinances. A blessing we are told (Ezra vi. 14.) attended his ministry. The temple was finished in about six years.

With this immediate object were connected, as was the universal custom of the Prophets, others more remote and important. He emblematically describes the four great empires (the chariots and horses probably representing the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman empires, vi.); many circumstances respecting the future condition of the Jews—their destruction by the Romans (xiv. &c.); and with these he intersperses many moral instructions and admonitions.

Of his predictions relative to our Saviour and his kingdom, the following may be noticed:—

Ch. ix. 9, with Matt. xxi. 2—9. Our Lord's riding into Jerusalem.

Ch. xi. 12, 13, with Matt. xxvi. 15. xxvii. 3—10; what our Lord would be sold for, and what would be done with the money.

Ch. xii. 10, with John xix. 34—37; Rev. i. 7; the

piercing of our Lord's side ; alluding also to the final conversion of the Jews, and their bitter compunction for having murdered their Messiah.

Ch. xiii. 1 ; the promulgation of the Gospel, and its distinguishing feature ; deliverance from the guilt and power of sin through the blood of Christ (1 John i. 7).

Ch. xiii. 7, with Phil. ii. 6 ; an atonement made by God manifest in the flesh ; "the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts."—(xiii. 7, with Matt. xxvi. 31.) Our Lord's desertion by his Apostles.

Ch. vi. 10—15. xiv. 8, 9 ; the glory of the Christian Church, uniting Jew and Gentile, under their great High Priest and Governor, Jesus Christ, of whom Joshua the High-priest, and Zerubbabel the governor, were types—a priest upon his throne exercising dominion over all the earth.

It thus appears from the foregoing references, that, next to Isaiah, Zechariah has the most frequent and plain allusions to the character and coming of Christ.

On the Book of the Prophet MALACHI.

B. C. BETWEEN 436 AND 397.

Malachi is the last of the Prophets of the Old Testament, as Nehemiah is of the historians, with whose administration Malachi's ministry nearly coincides.

His immediate object as a *minister*, was to reprove the Jews for many great abuses which, even so soon after such judgments and such mercies as attended their captivity and return from Babylon, still prevailed among both priests and people (Mal. ii. 11. compare with Neh. xiii. 23—27 ; Mal. i. 10. iii. 8, with Neh. xiii. 10, 11).

But his object as a *Prophet*, was to foretel the coming of our Lord, the Messenger of the covenant, the Son of righteousness, and his forerunner, John the Baptist. As the spirit of prophecy was now to cease, the Messiah having been clearly and progressively made known to the Jews by a long succession of prophets, and prophecies more and more distinct, Malachi with peculiar solemnity concludes his mission, sealing up the volume of prophecy, in a description of that Elijah, the messenger of the Lord, with an

account of whom the Evangelists begin their Gospel history (Dr. Gray).

Prophecy had been the oracle of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, to uphold the authority of the one, and reveal the promise of the other; and now its latest admonitions were like those of a faithful departing minister embracing and summing up his duties. Resigning its charge to the personal precursor of Christ, it expired with the Gospel on its tongue (Davison).

The following TABLE, shewing when each prophecy was written, is extracted from TOWNSEND'S valuable Work on the OLD TESTAMENT.

Prophecy.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion, or period, in which the Prophecy was written.	Date B.C.
ISAIAH			
i. 1.....	2 Chron. xxvi. 21...	General preface to the prophecies of Isaiah.....	758
2, to end.....	2 Chron. xxviii. 19.	{ On the desolate state of Judea on Pekah's invasion.....	740
ii. iii. iv. v. vi.	2 Chron. xxvi. 21...	Designation of Isaiah to the prophetic office.	758
vii. viii. ix. x. 1—5	2 Kings xvi. 5.....	On the invasion of Judea by Rezin and Pekah	742
5 to end—xi. xii. } xiii. xiv. 1—28 }	Isaiah xxiii. 18.....	{ On the first invasion of Palestine by Sennacherib.....	715
28, to end.....	2 Chron. xxviii. 27.	{ On the death of Ahas and the accession of Hezekiah.....	726
xv. xvi.....	2 Chron. xxxi. 21...	{ On the approaching invasion of Moab by Shalmaneser.....	726
xvii.....	Isaiah x. 4.....	Against Damascus on the invasion of Rezin.	742
xviii. xix.....	2 Kings xviii. 8.....	{ On the approaching captivity of the ten tribes, and against Egypt.....	721
xx.....	2 Kings xviii. 16 ...	On the capture of Ashdod.....	713
xxi.....	Isaiah xxii. 14....	{ On the appearance of the Medes and Persians in Sennacherib's army.....	713
xxii. 1—15.....	Isaiah xxvii. 13....	{ On the expected appearance of Sennacherib's army.....	713
15, to end	2 Kings xxi. 16.....	On the luxury and pride of Shebna	698
xxiii.....	Nahum iii. 19.....	{ On the exultation of the Tyrians, after the retreat of Shalmaneser.....	715
xxiv. xxv. xxvi. } xxvii..... }	Isaiah xiv. 27.....	On the desolation by Sennacherib's army.....	715
xxviii.....	2 Kings xvi. 9.....	{ To the ten tribes, after the destruction of Damascus.....	740
xxix. xxx. xxxi. } xxxii. xxxiii. } xxxiv. xxxv. }	Isaiah xx. 6.....	On Hezekiah's alliance with Egypt.....	713
xxxvi. xxxvii. ...	2 Kings xx. 11....	On Hezekiah's recovery.....	713
xxxviii. 1—9.....	2 Chron. xxix. 2....	History of Sennacherib's invasion	713
9—21.....	Isaiah xxxvii. 38...	History of Hezekiah's sickness	713
21, 22.....	Isaiah xxxv. 10. ...	Hezekiah's thanksgiving on his recovery.....	713
xxxix.....	Isaiah xxxviii. 8....	Recovery of Hezekiah	713
xl. xli. to end of the Book of Isaiah's Prophecies.....	Isaiah xxxviii. 22..	Visit of Merodach Baladan.....	713
	2 Kings xix. 37.....	{ Written in the latter years of the reign of Hezekiah, while the kingdom enjoyed peace after the destruction of Sennacherib's army.....	710 to 699
JEREMIAH.			
i. ii. iii. 1—6....	2 Chron. xxxiv. 7....	{ On the designation of Jeremiah to the prophetic office.....	629
6, to end; iv. v. vi.	2 Chron. xxxv. 19..	{ On the backsliding after the reformation by Josiah.....	612
vii. viii. ix. x.	Habak. iii. 19.....	On the near approach of the captivity.....	612
xi. xii.....	Jer. x. 25.	To remind the people of Josiah's covenant.....	610
xiii. xiv. xv. xvi. } xvii. xviii. xix. }	2 Kings xxiii. 37 ...	Appeals to the people before the captivity.....	609
xx.....	Jer. xix. 15.....	On Jeremiah's imprisonment by Pashur.....	609
xxi.....	Jer. xxxvii. 21....	Jeremiah repeats his predictions to Zedekiah....	588

Prophecy.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion, or period, in which the Prophecy was written.	Date B.C.
JEREMIAH.			
xxii. 1-24.....	Jer. xx. 18.....	{ On the approaching fate of Shallum and Jehoiakim..... }	609
24, to end.....	2 Kings xxiv. 9.....	On the approaching captivity of Jehoiakim.....	599
xxiii.....	Jer. xxii. 30.....	{ On the overthrow of the temporal kingdom of the Jews..... }	589
xxiv.....	Jer. lli. 3.....	On Jehoiachin being carried to Babylon.....	589
xxv.....	Jer. xxxv. 19.....	{ On the immediate approach of Nebuchadnezzar's army..... }	606
xxvi.....	Jer. xxii. 23.....	Apprehension of Jeremiah.....	608
xxvii. xxviii.....	Jer. xxxi. 40.....	{ On the approaching ruin of Zedekiah and of the surrounding nations..... }	595
xxix.....	Jer. xxiv. 10.....	Letter from Jeremiah to the captives at Babylon.....	597
xxx. xxxi.....	Jer. xxxix. 32.....	Prediction of the restoration of the Jews.....	597
xxxii. xxxiii.....	Jer. xxxiv. 10.....	{ Imprisonment of Jeremiah, and purchase of the field of Hananeel..... }	589
xxxiv. 1-11.....	Jer. xxxvii. 4.....	On the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem { On the recall of the Hebrew slaves to their former servitude..... }	590
11, to end.....	Jer. xxxvii. 10.....	On the Rechabites taking refuge in Jerusalem.....	589
xxxv.....	Jer. xli. 12.....	First reading of the roll by Baruch.....	606
xxxvi. 1-9.....	Jer. xxv. 38.....	Second reading of the roll by Baruch.....	606
9, to end.....	2 Kings xxiv. 4.....	Zedekiah sends for Jeremiah.....	605
xxxvii. 1-5.....	Jer. xxxix. 1.....	Part of the narrative of the siege of Jerusalem.....	590
5.....	Jer. xxxiii. 26.....	Prediction of the return of Pharaoh's army.....	589
xxxvii. 6-11.....	Jer. xlvii. 7.....	Jeremiah attempts to escape from Jerusalem.....	588
11, to end.....	Jer. xxxiv. 22.....	{ Jeremiah is committed to the dungeon of Malchiah..... }	588
xxxviii.....	Jer. xxi. 14.....	Commencement of the siege of Jerusalem.....	590
xxxix. 1.....	2 Kings xxv. 2.....	Capture of Jerusalem.....	588
2.....	Jer. lli. 4.....	Part of the history of the capture of Jerusalem.....	588
3.....	Jer. lli. 6.....	Flight of Zedekiah.....	588
4-10.....	Jer. xxxix. 2.....	{ Account of those who were left in Judea by Nebuzar-adan..... }	588
10.....	Jer. lli. 16.....	Jeremiah committed to the care of Nebuzar-adan.....	588
xxxix. 11-15.....	Jer. lli. 11.....	The promise to Ebed-melech.....	588
15, to end.....	Jer. xxxviii. 28.....	{ Conduct of Jeremiah after his capture by Nebuzar-adan..... }	588
xl. 1-13.....	2 Kings xxv. 22.....	Conspiracy of Ishmael against Gedaliah.....	588
13, to end-xlii. 1-11.....	Jer. xl. 12.....	Johanan rescues the captives from Ishmael.....	581
11, to end.....	Jer. xli. 10.....	Jeremiah reproves Johanan.....	587
xlii. xliii. 1-8.....	Jer. xlii. 18.....	On the arrival of Jeremiah in Egypt.....	587
8, to end.....	Jer. xliiii. 7.....	Predictions of Jeremiah at Tahpanhes.....	587
xliv.....	Jer. xli. 28.....	Address to Baruch on reading the roll.....	606
xlv.....	Jer. xxxviii. 8.....	On the defeat of Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish.....	606
xlv. 1-13.....	Jer. xxvi. 24.....	On the arrival of Jeremiah in Egypt.....	587
13, to end.....	Jer. xliii. 13.....	Before the conquest of Gaza by Pharaoh.....	589
xlvii.....	Jer. xxxvii. 5.....	{ On the ruin of the surrounding nations by Nebuchadnezzar..... }	595
xlviii. xlix.....	Jer. xxviii. 17.....	On Seraiah's going to Babylon.....	595
l. li.....	Jer. xlix. 30.....	Part of the life of Zedekiah.....	599
lii. 1-4.....	3 Chron. xxxvi. 10.....	{ Nebuchadnezzar commences the siege of Jerusalem..... }	588
4.....	2 Kings xxiv. 20.....	Part of the history of the siege of Jerusalem.....	588
5, 6.....	Jer. xxxix. 18.....	Part of the history of the siege of Jerusalem.....	588
7-12.....	Jer. xxxix. 3.....	Burning of the temple of Jerusalem.....	588
12-15.....	Jer. lli. 27.....	{ Account of those who were left in Judea by Nebuchadnezzar..... }	588
15, 16.....	Jer. lli. 23.....	Account of the Jewish spoils.....	588
17-24.....	Jer. lli. 14.....	{ Murder of the chief priests after the capture of Jerusalem..... }	588
24-28.....	Jer. xxxix. 14.....	Recapitulation of the captivities.....	587
28-31.....	Jer. xlv. 30.....	Release of Jehoiachin.....	561
31, to end.....	Daniel iv. 37.....		

Prophecy.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion, or period, in which the Prophecy was written.	Date B.C.
LAMENTATIONS.			
2 Kings xxv. 21....		Jeremiah laments the desolation of Judea.....	588
EZEKIEL.			
i. ii. iii. 1—22....	Daniel i. 22.....	Commission of Ezekiel.....	595
22, to end—iv. v. vi. vii.	Ezek. iii. 21.....	Prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem.....	595
viii. ix. x. xi. 1—22.....	Ezek. vii. 27.....	{ On the idolatries which occasioned the } Babylonish captivity.....	594
22, to end—xii. xiii. xiv. xv. xvi. xvii. xviii. xix.....	Ezek. xi. 21.....	{ On the approaching ruin of Zedekiah, and } the surrounding nations.....	594
xx. xxi. xxii. xxiii. xxiv.....	Ezek. xix. 14.....	On Ezekiel's being consulted by the Jewish elders	593
xxv. xxvi. xxvii. xxviii.....	Ezek. xxxiii. 49....	On the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem	591
xxix. 1—17.....	Ezek. xxxiii. 33....	On hearing of the capture of the city.....	587
17 to end—xxx. 1—20.....	Ezek. xxiv. 27.....	On Pharaoh's retreat before Nebuchadnezzar... { After the siege of Tyre.—Final prediction } against Egypt.....	589 572
xxx. 20, to end—xxxii. 1—17.....	Ezek. xxxix. 16....	On Pharaoh's retreat before Nebuchadnezzar... { On hearing of the fall of Jerusalem—Against } Egypt.....	588 587
17, to end... xxxiii. 1—21.....	Ezek. xxxii. 32....	To the captives in Babylon.....	587
xxxiii. 21, to end xxxiv. xxxv. xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix. xl. xli. xlii. xliii. xliiv. xlv. xlii. xliii.	Jer. lli. 30.....	On hearing of the fall of Jerusalem.....	587
	Jer. xxxiii. 20....	{ Appeal to the heads of the Jewish nation, } after the fall of Jerusalem.....	587
	Ezek. xxxvii. 28...	Prophecy of Gog and Magog.....	587
	Ezek. xxxix. 29....	Vision of the future spiritual temple.....	574
DANIEL.			
i. 1—8.....	2 Chron. xxxvi. 7...	Capture of Daniel by Nebuchadnezzar...	606
8, to end.....	Lament. v. 22....	Condition of Daniel at Babylon.....	606
ii.....	Ezek. xxx. 19....	Nebuchadnezzar's first dream.....	570
iii.....	Daniel ii. 49.....	The golden image set up.....	570
iv. 1—28.....	Daniel iii. 30.....	Nebuchadnezzar's second dream.....	569
28, to end... v.....	Daniel iv. 27.....	Madness of Nebuchadnezzar.....	569
vi.....	Psalm cxxiii.....	Belshazzar's feast.....	539
vii.....	Psalm cii.....	Daniel is cast into the den of lions.....	537
viii.....	2 Kings xxv. 30....	Daniel's vision of the four living creatures	541
ix.....	Daniel v. 31.....	Daniel's vision of the ram and the he-goat...	539
x. xi. xii.....	Daniel viii. 27....	Prophecy of the seventy weeks..... { On the interruption to the building of the } second temple.....	538 534
HOSSEA.			
i. ii. iii.....	2 Kings xiv. 27....	{ On the distress of Israel in the reign of } Jeroboam the second.....	801
iv.....	2 Kings xiv. 29....	{ On the state of the country during the in- } terregnum after the death of Jeroboam } the second.....	776
v. vi.....	2 Chron. xxviii. 25.	On Ahas's alliance with Tiglath Pileser....	739
vii. viii. ix. x. xi. xii. xiii.....	2 Kings xvii. 4....	On the revolt of Hoshea from Assyria.....	725
JOEL.			
i. ii. iii.....	2 Chron. xxvi. 15...	On Uzziah's increasing his army.....	787
AMOS.			
i. ii. iii. iv. v. vi. vii. 1.—10.	Hoshea iii. 5.....	In the reign of Jeroboam the second.....	793
10, to end—viii. ix.	2 Kings xiv. 28....	{ On being accused of a conspiracy against } Jeroboam the second.....	784

ARRANGEMENT OF EACH PROPHECY.

217

Prophecy.	After what Scripture.	Probable occasion, or period, in which the Prophecy was written.	Date B.C.
OBADIAH.			
	2 Chron. xxviii. 19.	Against Edom, on their assisting Pekah.....	740
JONAH.			
i. ii. iii. iv.....	Amos vii. 9.....	{ Soon after the accomplishment of Jonah's first Prophecy, 2 Kings xiv. 25..... }	787
MICAH.			
i. ii.....	2 Kings xv. 35....	{ On the continuance of idolatry in the reign of Jotham..... }	753
iii. iv. v. vi. vii....	Isaiah xvi. 14.	Written to support the reformation by Hezekiah	722
NAHUM.			
i. ii. iii.....	Isaiah xix. 25....	{ Against Nineveh, immediately after the captivity of the ten tribes..... }	720
HABAKKUK.			
i. ii. iii.....	Jeremiah vi. 30....	{ On the backsliding after the reformation by Josiah..... }	612
SEPHANIAH.			
i. ii. iii.....	1 Chron. xxxiv. 32.	To assist the reformation by Josiah.....	624
HAGGAI.			
i. 1—12.....	Ezra v. 1.....	On resuming the building of the second temple	520
12, to end }	Ezra v. 2.....	To encourage the builders of the second temple	520
ii. 1—10.....	Zechariah i. 6....	Address to the builders of the second temple...	520
10, to end.....			
ZECCHARIAH.			
i. 1—7.....	Haggai ii. 9.....	Exhortation to repentance.....	520
7, to end.. }	Haggai ii. 23.....	Address to the builders of the second temple...	520
ii. iii. iv. v. vi. }			
vii. viii.....	Psalms cxxxviii.....	To the messengers from Babylon.....	519
ix. x. xi. xii. }	Ezra x. 44.....	Probably about the time of Ezra's reformation.	457
xiii. xiv.... }			
MALACHI.			
i. ii. iii. 1—16. ...	Psalms cxix.....	{ On the corruptions introduced, after the reformation by Nehemiah..... }	433
16, to end—iv....	Nehem. xiii. 31....	{ After the completion of the reformation by Nehemiah..... }	400

The above Table states after what Scripture the different portions of the prophetic books are to be read in the order of time, but it does not necessarily imply that there is any connexion of subject between the Scripture and the prophecy; as for instance, Mal. i. ii. iii. 1—16. following Ps. cxix. Often, however, there is an important connexion: for instance, 2 Kings xvi. 5. with Isa. vii—x. 1—5. presents us with an astonishing view of the long-suffering of God to one of the most wicked of men. The prophet Isaiah, for the consolation of Ahaz, being sent not only to assure him of immediate safety, but to announce to him one of the most splendid prophecies in the Old Testament respecting the promised Messiah (Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6, &c.).

§ 5. *History of the Jews in the period between the Old and New Testament.*

In closing this account of the Books of the Old Testament, and before proceeding to that of the New Testament, it seems desirable to give a slight sketch of the history of the Jews during this interval.

The Political History of the Jewish nation in the interval between the close of the Old Testament and the coming of our blessed Lord.

This, as gathered principally from the Books of Maccabees and Josephus, may be thus briefly stated. The inspired history leaves them subject to the Persians. When that power was overthrown by Alexander the Great, B. C. 330, they became subject to him, and, on his death, to his successors, forming a part of the Egyptian monarchy. During this period many thousands of them were carried into Egypt, and their Scriptures, as has been already remarked, page 5, were translated into the Greek language. After this the Jews were subject to the Syrian monarchy. During this period they were so violently persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes (B. C. 168), as to be altogether deprived, for three years and a half, of their civil and religious liberties. (See page 4.) He went so far as to dedicate the temple of Jehovah to Jupiter Olympus, erecting his statue on the altar of burnt-offering, and punishing with death all that could be found acting contrary to his decree: this rousing them to resistance, they were rescued into liberty by the piety and bravery of the family of the Maccabees, in whom the successors of David were re-established on the throne. These continued to flourish with diminished splendour, and in subserviency to the Roman power, till the days of Herod, an Idumean by birth, but of the Jewish religion, who conquered and deposed the family of the Maccabees, and was appointed king of the Jews by the Romans; under him our Lord Jesus Christ was born, and then, and not till then, with the exception of the short predicted period of Antiochus Epiphanes, the sceptre departed from Judah, Gen. xlix. 10.—See Dr. Gray.

The Moral History of the Jewish nation in the interval between the close of the Old Testament and the coming of our blessed Lord.

This period of four hundred years presents the same illustration of human depravity which their former history had done. A striking effect of the Babylonian captivity, was to destroy in them all tendency to idolatry, to which from their earliest history before that event they had been most prone; but it was to present their depravity under a new shape, that of becoming zealous for the form of religion, while denying its power. Multiplying human traditions; teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, they made the word of God of none effect; and, neglecting the only standard of truth, they were divided into numberless opposing sects, and were filled with contempt of each other, and of the world around them (Rom. ii. 17—20; 1 Thess. ii. 15; Acts xxii. 21, 22.) Their very teachers are described by our Lord (Matt. xxiii.) as full of hypocrisy and iniquity; and their doctrines such as rendered those who embraced them twofold more the children of hell than before.

If, with this view of the moral state of the Jews, at the time of our Lord's coming, we connect the account given by Mosheim of the Gentile world (vol. i. page 32, &c.), that (and under every advantage which the wisdom of this world could give) polytheism was increasing among the vulgar, and that among the learned, the prevailing philosophy was the Epicurean and Academic, which struck at the foundation of all religion, we may remark at what a crisis of the world's state did its Redeemer appear: who can doubt the necessity for his coming, and not rejoice that he has come. Nor let us forget the purpose for which he came (Tit. ii. 11—14; 2 Cor. xiii. 5; Luke vi. 47—49; Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24).

QUESTIONS ON THE PROPHETS.

Why is this part of the Old Testament distinguished by the name of "the Prophets?" p. 192.

Which are the greater, and which the minor Prophets?

Why are they so called? p. 193.

In what sense may these books be said to have but one author, and what is their great subject? p. 193.

Considering the prophets as preachers also to their respective generations, what is the scope of their writings, and what the benefits we may derive from them? p. 193.

Which of them prophesied before, during, and after the Babylonian captivity? p. 194.

By what name, descriptive of the peculiar feature of his book, is *Isaiah* distinguished? p. 194.

Give some references to his prophecies, which justify the propriety of that name, particularly those respecting our Lord. p. 195.

Repeat *Isaiah* liii.

In reading this and every other book of the prophets, to what, besides their prophecies, should we pay particular attention? pp. 195, 196.

What is the peculiar feature of *Jeremiah's* character and writings?

Give some account of him, his early life, and treatment as a prophet from his countrymen.

Mention some of those prophecies in which he points more immediately to Christ. p. 197.

To whom is the Book of Lamentations of Jeremiah peculiarly suited, and why? p. 198.

Give some account of Ezekiel, and of his immediate object in writing.

Mention some prophecies in which he points more immediately to the Messiah and his kingdom. p. 199.

Give some account of Daniel, his piety, wisdom.

His prophecies respecting Christ. p. 201.

How was Daniel engaged when that wonderful prophecy was declared to him respecting our Lord's atonement, and the time when he should offer that atonement? What may we learn from this? p. 202.

Through what period of time do the prophecies of Daniel extend, and what is there remarkable in this, when we consider the state of the Jews at the time? p. 202.

What good arose to the Gentile world from the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and what view does this give of the character of God?

In what respect do the prophecies of Hosea differ from those of *Isaiah*?

How long did Hosea prophesy? p. 203.

What allusion does Matthew ii. 15, make to this book?

Can you mention any of the prophecies contained in it?

Which chapters of Hosea are particularly suited to awaken and cherish a spirit of repentance?

What remarkable prophecy did Joel deliver respecting the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and when was it fulfilled? p. 204.

What was the occupation of Amos?

By whom were all the prophets qualified for their office?

What is the subject of Obadiah's prophecy? p. 205.

What was the character of the Edomites, and what may we learn from their destruction?

What other prophets foretold their destruction?

Give some account of Jonah. p. 206.

By what two circumstances is this book distinguished?

What views does it give of God and men?

What may we learn from the Ninevites?

Does our Lord make any, and what, reference to Jonah and the Ninevites?

In whose reigns did Micah prophesy? p. 207.

What denunciations does he utter against Israel and Judah?

What remarkable prophecy did he utter about Christ, and which is referred to in Matt. ii.?

Illustrate the spirit of love in which he wrote.

What does Nahum's name signify, and show how suitable it is to the object of his prophecy. p. 208.

How does Nahum's prophecy remarkably illustrate the moral use of prophecy?

With what book particularly should Nahum be read, and what may we learn from the comparison?

When did Habakkuk prophesy, and by what are his writings remarkably distinguished? p. 209.

What was the chief subject of his prophecy?

What is that principle alluded to by Habakkuk, which forms the character of the true servant of God in every age?

In whose reign did Zephaniah prophesy, and with what object?

What does he predict of Nineveh? p. 210.

What prophets flourished after the return of the Jews from Babylon; and what was their leading object?

What did Haggai foretell of the glory of the second temple, and how was this fulfilled?

Mention some of Zechariah's prophecies relative to our blessed Lord.

Who was the last of the prophets of the Old Testament, and what was his object as such? p. 212.

Show the immediate connexion between his prophecy and the account with which the Evangelists, 400 years after, begin their Gospels.

Give some illustration of the use of the arrangement of each prophecy, as made by the table. pp. 215—217.

Give some account of the history of the Jews in the times between the Old and New Testament. p. 218. What was their religious state in the time of our Lord? 219. What account does Mosheim give of the religious state of the Gentile world? What does this show, in reference to our Lord's coming? What was the great object of our Lord's coming? How may we know whether we are really benefiting by his having come; and what should be our daily prayer?

SHORT ACCOUNT
OF THE
BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE New Testament consists of twenty-seven different books, written by eight different authors, all of whom lived at the same time with our blessed Lord. The books may be divided into four parts: The Gospels, The Acts, The Epistles, and The Revelation of St. John.

§ 1. ON THE GOSPELS.

Gospel means good tidings; and this name is applied to the four first books of the New Testament, which contain an history, or rather such memoirs as the Holy Spirit in his wisdom saw fit should be recorded of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, the Saviour of the world (Luke ii. 10). Hence also the writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are called Evangelists, as the bearers of these good tidings. St. Matthew and St. Luke trace this history from our Lord's conception by the Holy Ghost; St. Mark and St. John begin their accounts with his public appearance at his baptism.

The following consideration will throw great light on the reading of the Gospels,—*that our Lord's ministry was a course of religious education to his disciples, pursued step by step.* The importance of this view of his ministry will appear in its harmonizing what might otherwise seem to present a difficulty to one just entering on the study of the Bible; namely, the difference between His mode of teaching and that of his Apostles. The law and the prophets were until John (Luke xvi. 16). John said enough to show that he was acquainted with the peculiar object of our Saviour's coming, "to make reconciliation for iniquity, &c." (Isa. liii. Dan. ix.

24. with John i. 29), but he did not enlarge upon it: he came preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin, declaring the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Our Lord took up truth as his forerunner left it, enforcing the same elementary doctrine (Heb. vi. 1.) as that which characterised the ministry of the Baptist, urging it from the same consideration, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17). Hence, in the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord enforces chiefly the spirituality of the moral law, touching very little on the doctrine of the atonement, the great doctrine of revelation, so much and so plainly insisted upon in the Epistles (1 Cor. ii. 2, &c.); because just views of the spirituality of the moral law—that it reached to the most secret thoughts, condemning anger without cause as murder, and a wanton look as adultery—were (to those who had so lost sight of this) a necessary preparation for their reception of the doctrine of the atonement (Gal. iii. 24).

Again, because the people were too prejudiced to be instructed more clearly, our Lord spoke to them in parables,—a mode not at all followed by his Apostles,—parables which, in most cases, he left unexplained. For some time he avoided an open disclosure of his character (Matt. xvi. 20; Mark iii. 11, 12; Luke iv. 41;) even forbidding others to declare it. He almost always calls himself the Son of Man, sometimes waving the assertion of his Divinity, as in his conversation with the rich young man (Mark x. 18); and he generally, throughout the earlier part of his ministry, speaks of himself as not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. xv. 24); and when sending his disciples to preach (Matt. x. 5), forbids them to go in the way of the Gentiles. This, to one just entering on the study of the Bible, might present difficulties, which are removed by the consideration that our Lord was carrying forward the same principle which had characterised the dispensation of mercy from the beginning, that of its "gradual" development. Even the very night before his crucifixion, our Lord, though explaining to his Apostles (John xiv—xvi; Matt. xxvi. 28.) more of the mysteries of the Gospel than he had previously done, adds, "*I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them yet;*" doctrines which (though he had touched upon) even their

minds were too prejudiced to receive, and which it required his death, resurrection, and ascension, to illustrate. (See Matt. xvi. 22; Mark ix. 32; Luke xviii. 34. xxiv. 25; Mark xvi. 14; Acts i. 6.) Archbishop Magee remarks, "until it was clearly established that Jesus was the Messiah, and until, by his resurrection crowning all his miraculous acts, it was made manifest that he who had been crucified by the Jews was *he* who should save them and all mankind from their sins, it must have been premature to explain how this was to be effected."

To which a remark of Macknight may be added, "that our Lord came from heaven not so much to make the Gospel revelation, as to be the *subject* of it, by doing and suffering all that was necessary to procure the salvation of mankind, appointing his Spirit, after his ascension, to be its chief interpreter." And thus are we taught to look to the preaching of the Apostles in the Acts, and especially to their Epistles, both dictated by that Spirit who is emphatically called the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. i. 11), for the full view of the Christian dispensation (John xv. 26, 27).

On the Gospel of St. MATTHEW.

St. Matthew, surnamed Levi, was a native of Galilee. His occupation was that of a publican, or tax-gatherer, under the Romans, at Capernaum. While thus employed in collecting the customs due upon commodities which were carried, and from persons who passed over the Lake of Gennesareth, he was called by our Lord to be his disciple (ch. ix. 9), and under the influence of his grace immediately obeyed. As an illustration of the spirit in which he wrote, it may be remarked, that in recording the names of the twelve Apostles (ch. x), he particularly speaks of himself under the opprobrious term of Matthew the *publican* (ver. 3), as one anxious to magnify the goodness of God in his election. See page 12.

It is observable also, that the only notice he takes of the act by which he abandoned every worldly prospect for Christ, is in the following words: "As Jesus passed by, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom, and he saith unto him, Follow me; and he arose and

followed him" (ix. 9). The various instances of his weakness of faith, in common with that of the other disciples—his desertion of his Lord in Gethsemane (xxvi. 56), and that Joseph of Arimathea showed much more strength of faith, much more love than himself, in the awful hour of the Saviour's deepest humiliation; these are faithfully recorded. Thus presenting to us a bright example of humility and love of truth; and suggesting to us the prayer for grace to forsake, as he did, all covetous desires and inordinate love of riches, and follow the same Saviour.—See Collect for St. Matthew's day.

It is generally agreed that St. Matthew's Gospel was the first written, and that he wrote it in Palestine, about six or eight years after our Lord's ascension. It treats of the following subject:

Ch. i. ii. The infancy of our blessed Lord.

Ch. iii. iv. 1—11. Events preparatory to our Lord's public ministry; including the account of the ministry of John the Baptist, his forerunner; and his own baptism and temptation.

Ch. iv. 12.—xx. 16. Our Lord's public ministry, particularly in Galilee.

Ch. xx. 17.—xxviii. Transactions more immediately connected with his last sufferings, death, and resurrection.

As the Evangelists have many qualities in common, so there is in each, that which distinguishes him from the rest. There are two which distinguish St. Matthew. *The adaptation of his narrative to the Jews. The distinctness and particularity with which he has related many of our Lord's discourses.*

First. *The adaptation of his narrative to the Jews*, which appears, (1.) In his reference to Jewish customs, cities, and places, as well known by his readers. (2.) In the prominence he gives to those particulars of our Lord's history, which were most likely to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ: for instance, "No sentiment relative to the Messiah was more prevalent among them than that he should be of the race of Abraham and family of David; and accordingly we find that St. Matthew begins his narrative by showing the descent of Jesus from these two illustrious persons. He then relates the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the city in which the Messiah was expected to be

born, and throughout his Gospel he omits no opportunity of explaining the Scriptures, and of pointing out the fulfilment of prophecy, which was known to have greater weight with the Jews than any other species of evidence. Moreover, he records many of our Saviour's reproofs to the Jews for their errors and superstitions; thus endeavouring to remove from their minds those prejudices which impeded the progress or sullied the purity of the Christian faith."—*Tomline.*

Secondly. As an illustration of the distinctness and particularity with which he relates many of our Lord's discourses, may be mentioned his Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.—vii. contrasted with Luke vi. 20—49), his charge to his Apostles (Matt. x. 1—42. with Luke ix. 1—5).

Among the most remarkable things recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel, and not found in any other, are the following:—The visit of the wise men,—our Saviour's flight into Egypt,—the slaughter of the infants by Herod,—the parable of the ten virgins,—the dream of Pilate's wife,—the resurrection of many saints at our Saviour's crucifixion, and the bribing of the Roman guard appointed to watch the sepulchre. Our Lord's description of the last judgment, as recorded by this Evangelist, demands our special attention (ch. xxv), that while looking simply to his merits for the remission of sins, (ch. xxvi. 28), we may manifest our interest in those merits, by active love to his people (xxv. 40).

On the Gospel of ST. MARK.

This Evangelist was not, like St. Matthew, one of the twelve Apostles. He was probably nephew to Barnabas (Col. iv. 10), John being his Hebrew name, and the son of Mary, a pious woman at Jerusalem, at whose house, we read (Acts xii. 12), many were gathered praying on behalf of St. Peter, when cast into prison by Herod. The further notices of St. Mark in the New Testament, are Acts xiii. 5. xv. 37—39; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11; 1 Pet. v. 13; in which last reference the Apostle calls Mark his son, thus leading us to infer that Peter was the instrument of his conversion. Mark probably wrote his Gospel at Rome, about

the year A.D. 60, and when with Peter, whose familiar companion he was. In connexion with the fact of his writing under the direction of St. Peter, it is interesting to remark, that many things honourable to that Apostle, and mentioned in the other Evangelists, are omitted by St. Mark, whilst the failings of St. Peter are all recorded in this Gospel. Thus St. Mark does not add the benediction and promise which St. Peter received from our Lord upon his acknowledging him to be the Messiah (Mark viii. 29. with Matt. xvi. 17), but he relates at large the severe reproof which he received soon after for not bearing to hear that Christ must suffer (Mark viii. 33). Peter's crime of denying our Lord is also fully set forth by Mark (ch. xiv. 31—71); whereas, when speaking of his repentance, verse 72, he says, Peter wept; from St. Matthew we learn Peter wept *bitterly* (Matt. xxvi. 75).

It has been already remarked, that St. Matthew in his Gospel more particularly addresses the Jews; and that hence he quotes frequently from the ancient prophets, and alludes to Jewish customs, &c. as well known. St. Mark, on the contrary, writing for the immediate use of Christians at Rome, which was at that time the great metropolis of the world, and common centre of all civilized nations, accommodates himself to every description of persons. Quotations from the ancient prophets, and allusions to Jewish customs, are, in a great measure, avoided, and such explanations are added as might be necessary for Gentile readers at Rome. Thus, when Jordan is first mentioned in this Gospel, the word river is prefixed (i. 5); the oriental word Corban, is said to mean a gift (ch. vii. 11); the preparation is said to be the day before the sabbath (ch. xv. 42); and defiled, or common hands, are said to mean, unwashed hands (ch. vii. 2); instead of the word mammon, he uses the term riches.

Also, ch. xv. 21, having mentioned Simon, the Cyrenian, he adds, that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, because both those persons resided at Rome, and were known to the Roman Christians (Rom. xvi. 13).

St. Mark alludes to most of the events recorded by St. Matthew, though more concisely. Omitting some things related by St. Matthew, as the genealogy and birth of Christ, and the Sermon on the Mount, he enlarges on some facts

mentioned by Matthew, such as the cure of the paralytic (ch. ii. with Matt. ix.), and the miracle among the Gadarenes (ch. v. 1, with Matt. viii. 28); and he records two miraculous cures—that of the deaf man who had an impediment in his speech (ch. vii. 31—37), and of the blind man at Bethsaida (ch. viii. 22—24); which are not mentioned by any other evangelist. He alone mentions the parable of the seed growing gradually but insensibly (iv. 26—29); illustrative of the progress of the Gospel in the world, and of grace in the heart. It is to be remarked, also, that he opens his Gospel by announcing the Saviour to be the Son of God; and records, at the close of it, as the declaration of that Saviour, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (xvi. 16); thus, in the most solemn manner, implying our responsibility for our belief.

On the Gospel of St. LUKE.

St. Luke is generally supposed to be that beloved physician who is mentioned Col. iv. 14, and who appears from that passage to have been a Gentile. He was probably a Gentile proselyte. St. Luke also wrote the Acts (Acts i. 1); and it is inferred from the 11th verse of the xvth chapter of that book, that he was a fellow-traveller with St. Paul; for he says, Loosing from Troas *we* came with a straight course to Samothracia. After St. Paul left Philippi, Luke again uses the third person (Acts xvii. 1); and he does not resume the first person till St. Paul was in Greece the second time (Acts xx. 5, 6). From this period he probably continued with that Apostle till his death; being mentioned in an Epistle written just before St. Paul's death (2 Tim. iv. 11). St. Luke's account of the last supper remarkably agrees with that given by St. Paul (Luke xxii. 19, 20, with 1 Cor. xi. 23—25).

Though, like St. Mark, he was not an Apostle, nor is he once mentioned in the Gospels, the sources of information to which the Holy Spirit directed him, he himself tells us (i. 2). His Gospel was written about A.D. 63 or 64, and while passing over various particulars mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark (who are generally supposed to have

written before him), contains many things not mentioned by them; among which are:—

Miracles.—Raising the widow's son (ch. vii.); healing the deformed woman (xiii.); the ten lepers (xvii.).

Discourses.—First public preaching at Nazareth (ch. iv.); conversation with two disciples going to Emmaus (ch. xxiv.).

Parables.—Good Samaritan (ch. x.); rich fool (xii.); barren fig-tree (xiii.); prodigal son (xv.); unjust steward (xvi.); rich man and Lazarus (xvi.); importunate widow—pharisee and the publican (xviii.).

Events, &c. of our Lord's Life.—Many circumstances connected with his birth (ch. i. ii.); extreme poverty and neglect from man, though announced by angels; and the return of the spirit of prophecy, as seen in Elizabeth, Mary, Zacharias, Anna, and Simeon. Our Lord's early piety (ii. 40); obedience to his parents (ii. 51); compassion to sinners weeping over apostate Jerusalem (xix. 41).

Circumstances of his death, &c.—Our Lord being sent to Herod (xxiii. 5—11); prayer for his murderers (xxiii. 34); forgiveness of the dying thief (xxiii. 43). Thus showing himself, in the moment of his greatest weakness, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him; exercising the prerogative of Deity in the very agonies of death (ch. v. 21).

On the Gospel of St. JOHN.

The following references show what the Scriptures record concerning the writer of this Gospel, and they are thus left to form an exercise to the young, in looking them out: (ch. xiii. 23—26. xix. 26, 27. 35. xx. 2—10. xxi. 2. 7. 20. 25; Matt. iv. 21, 22. x. 2. xx. 20—23; Mark i. 19, 20. v. 37. ix. 2. 38. xiv. 33; Luke ix. 49—56. xxii. 8; Acts iii. 1—11. iv. 13—20. viii. 14; Gal. ii. 9; Rev. i. 1. 9. xxi. 2.)

Not however to omit all notice of one so distinguished, it may be mentioned, that he was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and younger brother of James (generally called James the Great), with whom he was brought up as a fisherman, and with whom he was called to be an Apostle,

Our Saviour surnamed these two brothers, Boanerges (Mark iii. 17), sons of thunder, which title we may understand as a prophetic declaration of the zeal and resolution with which they would hereafter bear testimony to the great truths of the Gospel. They and St. Peter were chosen to accompany our Lord on several occasions, when the other apostles were not permitted to be present. But St. John was yet more honoured.

He seems to have been the only Apostle present at the crucifixion; and to him our blessed Lord, just as he was expiring on the cross, gave the strongest proof of his confidence and affection, by consigning to him the care of his mother (John xix. 26, &c.). As he was, of all the Apostles, the only witness of our Lord's death (xix. 34, 35); so was he the first who believed without hesitation his resurrection (John xx. 8). The following remark of Lowth describes the general character of his writings:—"God, who distributes his graces and gifts severally as He pleases, seems to have given John a peculiar insight into the mysteries of the Divine love. He takes a particular pleasure in enlarging upon it, and he treats of it in a plain and inartificial style, but yet with such a lofty eloquence as is above the rules of human art, and can only be ascribed to the influence of that Holy Spirit which gave him utterance."

St. John probably wrote his Gospel about the year 97, *i. e.* more than twenty-five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and evidently considers those whom he addresses (who were probably Gentiles in Asia Minor), as but little acquainted with Jewish customs and names (see ch. i. 38. 41. ii. 6. 13. iv. 9. xi. 55).

This Evangelist has *omitted* many things recorded by the others; for instance: he has given no account of our Saviour's birth, baptism, temptation in the wilderness, call of the twelve Apostles, nor of many parables, discourses, journeyings, to which they refer, nor any miracle recorded by them, but that of feeding the five thousand (ch. vi.).

He has *recorded* many things omitted by the other evangelists; as John the Baptist directing his disciples to Christ (ch. i.); Christ turning water into wine (ch. ii.); healing the nobleman's son (ch. iv.), and the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda (v.); and the blind man at the pool of Siloam (ix.); raising Lazarus from the dead (xi.); but

especially our Lord's discourses with Nicodemus (iii.); with the Samaritan woman (iv.); with the Pharisees, concerning his divinity (v.); at Capernaum, concerning himself as the bread of life (vi.); and with his disciples on various occasions, particularly on the night preceding his crucifixion (xiv—xvi.); his intercessory prayer (xvii.); and, after his resurrection, his appearance to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias, and restoration of Peter to his Apostolic office (xxi).

Clement, of Alexandria, calls this a spiritual Gospel, and accordingly we find in it less of historical narrative than in any other, and more of doctrine; a fuller development of Christian truth, admirably adapted to confute various heresies, which, since the writing of the three first Gospels, had sprung up respecting the person of our blessed Lord.

The first eighteen verses of the first chapter are the clue to the intention of the whole Gospel; such discourses and miracles being collected afterwards, as confirm the doctrine there laid down, to prove that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, one with the Father.

These things were written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name (xx. 31). Let the solemn thought sink deep into our hearts, that "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him" (iii. 36; see also iii. 3, &c.).

This was probably the last written of all the books of the Bible, and more than fifty years after the Gospel of St. Matthew. In reference to the circumstances which called it forth, it may be remarked, that the various heresies which sprang up in the very first age of Christianity, illustrate how God overrules evil for good, as He has thus furnished his Church with adequate instruction and guidance in every age after. "No new opinion, either right or wrong, respecting the faith in Christ, has been started since the close of the Bible." Hence the perfect sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, as in them the *principles* of every error are exposed and confuted.

The following questions, on the several chapters of the Gospels, framed by the Rev. William Wilson, have been found very useful in the examination of the children of the National Schools at Walthamstow:—

QUESTIONS ON THE GOSPELS.

1. What are the principal subjects of this chapter ?
2. Do you find the same subjects in any of the other Gospels ?
3. What do you learn from this chapter respecting the person of Christ—his Divine or his Human nature ?
4. What doctrines are you here taught to believe ?
5. What duties are here enjoined upon you, and from what motives ?
6. What promises or threatenings does this chapter contain ?
7. In what respects is our Lord here placed before us as an example ?
8. Are any other persons mentioned in this chapter ?
9. Were they remarkable for excellences or faults ?
10. Do you find mention of them in other parts of Scripture ?
11. Is any sin reprov'd in this chapter ?
12. Is any thing good commended ?
13. Do you, in any respect, learn from it how and for what you ought to pray ?
14. Do you discover here the fulfilment of any prophecy ?
15. Is any prophecy delivered in this chapter ?
16. Do you find reference to any type, or ceremonial observance of the law ?
17. Are you reminded by any part of this chapter, of points of history which occur in other places in the Bible ?
18. Is any religious sect introduced ? What do you know of that sect ?
19. Do you observe a notice of any eastern custom ?
20. What places are here mentioned ? Find them out in a map.
21. Do you remember any event which is said to have happened in those places ?
22. Does this chapter contain any thing relating to Natural History ? Animals, trees, plants, &c.
23. Is use made of this part of Natural History in any of the figurative language of Scripture ?
24. Do you observe any thing which strikes you in the language of any part of this chapter ?
25. Are you reminded, by what you here find, of any proverb of Scripture ?
26. Does any part of it occur in the services or formularies of the Church ?
27. Is any verse of a Psalm or Hymn brought to your recollection, while you read any part of this chapter ?
28. Is there any thing in this chapter, which, on reading, you did not understand, and wish an explanation of ?

A most important subject to which to direct the attention is, the character of our blessed Lord, considered as an example to us. After having read a Gospel, the following questions, bearing chiefly on this point, may profitably exercise the minds of the young. They are merely given as specimens ; many more might be added.

Give some instance of our Lord's attendance on public worship, at the temple, synagogue,—his submission to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law (Luke iv. 16 ; John vii. 37).

Retirement for private prayer, and under what circumstances (Matt. xiv. 23. xxvi. 36; Mark i. 35; Luke vi. 12)? His prayers for others (Luke xxii. 32, Peter; John xvii. his Church; Luke xxiii. 34, his enemies)? His prayer with others (Luke ix. 28)? Collect the different prayers of our Lord, and observe their chief subjects, also his directions on the subject of prayer? Also our Lord's acts of praise and thanksgiving, and the occasions, &c. (Matt. xi. 25; Luke xxii. 17; John xi. 41, &c.)? His reference to the Holy Scriptures; as in his temptation, discourses with his disciples, with his enemies, and on the cross? His submission to the will of his Heavenly Father (John iv. 34. v. 30. xviii. 11)? Zeal (John ii. 17. iv. 31; Luke ix. 51, &c.)? Giving an improving turn to events and circumstances around him (Matt. ix. 37; Luke xii. 15; John iv. 32. vi. 27. vii. 37)? Humility (John viii. 50. xiii. 1, &c.)? Self-denial, tenderness—collect the expressions of his tenderness towards his disciples, the multitude, &c. (Matt. ix. 2. 22; Luke xxiii. 28; John xiv—xvi.)? Love for his enemies? Any illustrations how our Lord acted as a Son (Luke ii. 51; John xix. 26)? as a Master, a friend (John xi.)? a subject (Matt. xvii. 24)? a teacher (Matt. xi. 29)? Instances of his reproof, and what he reproved others for (his Apostles, as Peter, Matt. xvi. 23; Luke xxii. 61; John xxi.; James and John, Luke ix. 55; Thomas, John xx. 27; Judas, John xii. 7, 8; other disciples, Luke xxiv. 25)? His enemies? What sins seemed to call forth his severest reproof (John viii. 44; Matt. xxiii.)?

What does our Lord say of unbelief (Matt. xi. 21; John iii. 36), of anger, covetousness, and other vices; and of particular virtues, as meekness, &c.? Instances in which our Lord made people reprove themselves (Mark xii. 16, &c.; John iv. 16, &c.)?

Who were particularly the objects of our Lord's commendation, and what for (Matt. viii. 10. xv. 28. xxvi. 13. Luke x. 42. xxi. 3)?

Under what circumstances did our Lord receive honour and praise from God or man (Luke iii. 22. iv. 22; Mark i. 28. vii. 37)?

When did our Lord give offence, and what occasioned it (Mark vi. 3; John vi. 66. xix. 7)?

What charges were brought against our Lord? By what opprobrious names was he called? Collect the different reasons which were given by different individuals for not following, or for rejecting Him, as his low origin, &c. (Mark vi. 3. x. 22; John vii. 41)?

What reasons does our Lord give, why He was rejected (John vii. 7)?

Any instances of our Lord's great command of temper under circumstances calculated greatly to irritate it (Matt. xxvii. 14; Luke xxii.; John xiii. treatment of Judas, &c.)? His condescension to the infirmities of others (John xx. 27; Matt. xxvi. 41).

Under what circumstances did our Lord turn away from those who applied to Him, or refuse to comply with their request (Mark viii. 11, 12. x. 35, &c.; Luke xxiii. 8)? or seem to check their coming (Matt. viii. 19, 20. Mark v. 19; Luke xiv. 25, &c.)?

Mention some of the occasions on which our Lord wrought his miracles. When did he, though not asked (John ii. v. 5. ix. 1; Luke xxii. 51)?

Any instances in which He required faith as a condition (Matt. ix. 29)? any at the intercession of others (Matt. ix. 2, &c.)?

What questions were asked our Lord? What rich people came to him, and poor, and learned, and Gentiles? Did any fathers or mothers

come to him on behalf of their children, any masters, brothers, &c. ? What questions did our Lord ask ?

What views did prophecy give of our Lord's character, and what illustrations does his conduct afford of those views (Isa. xi. 1—9. xlii. 1—4. l. 4. lii. lxi.) ?

Isa. lii. 13. speaks of his dealing prudently. Observe his prudence in declining all interference with civil affairs (Luke xii. 13; John vi. 15); in the use of means for the preservation of his life (Matt. iv. 12; Mark iii. 6, 7; John vii. 1—9. x. 39. xi. 53, 54); wisdom in suiting his instructions to his hearers (John xvi. 12).

Show our Lord's respect for the distinctions of civil life, authority of rulers, &c. (Luke xiv. 7. xvii. 7; Mark xii. 17.)

What does our Lord say, was the great principle which influenced him in all he did (John iv. 34) ? also as to his object in coming into the world (Matt. xx. 28; Luke xix. 10; John ix. 39. x. 18. xviii. 37) ? By what titles does He speak of Himself ? What does he promise to those who become his disciples (John x. 11. 28) ?

How does He describe the character of such (Matt. v.) ? To what extent does He require they should love Him ? In what terms does He assert his Divinity (John v. 23) ? How does He describe the office of the Holy Spirit (John xiv—xvi.) ?

How does our Lord describe a future state of happiness and of misery ? How does He describe his second coming ?

The following remarks on the miracles of our Lord, as illustrative of of his character, will, in some measure, show the use to be made of the above questions.

Our Lord's miracles illustrate (1) his *devotional spirit*.—Thus, John xi. 41. he accompanied the miracle with prayer, and John vi. 11. with giving of thanks. That his miracles, his acts of love to man, were not suffered to interfere with his practice of private devotion, is seen, Mark i. 34, 35. After sunset, at the close of a day of labour, multitudes are brought to him and healed; none were turned away; but his own rest is sacrificed: rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

(2) His *self-denial and submission to the will of his Heavenly Father*.—He wrought no miracles till he was thirty years of age, and none afterwards to promote his own ease and comfort. The intention of those he wrought for the preservation of his own life, was that he might reserve himself for that to which he often distinctly alluded (Matt. xx. 19, &c.)—the sacrifice of himself in the agony of the cross. Neither extreme hunger in the wilderness (Matt. iv. 2), nor intense suffering in the garden of Gethsemane, or on the cross, though taunted to come down from it, could drive him to work a miracle for his relief, when the glory of God would not be promoted by it, though legions of angels waited his command (Matt. xxvi. 53). It must have been very painful to our Lord's natural feelings to wound those of Martha and Mary, by suffering Lazarus to die (John xi. 6). But he would show us, that whatever be our power to help our friends, or inclination to do so, we must be guided in the exercise of that power by a regard to the glory of God (John xi. 4) and their spiritual welfare, rather than the gratification of their present feelings.

As the miracles of our Lord illustrate his piety to God, so do they his love to man.

(1) *The activity of that love.*—He went about doing good, healing, &c. (Acts x. 38), seeking out opportunities (Matt. iv. 23).—He was found of them who sought him not (John v. 6.) the man at the pool of Bethesda). Nor was our Lord ever overcome by the discouraging dissuaves of others to neglect, or defer, an exercise of mercy. Thus (Mark v. 40.) they laughed him to scorn, but he took the damsel by the hand, and raised her from the dead.—Matt. xx. 31. the multitude rebuked the blind man, but our Lord healed him.—John viii. 59. ix. 1. they took up stones to cast at him, but though, as it were, escaping for his life, yet as he passed by he healed a man born blind, *stopping*, and with some deliberation anointing his eyes.—Matt. xii. 14. the Pharisees held a council how they might destroy him: our Lord withdrew, but not to cease to labour: great multitudes followed him, and he *healed* them all.—Mark vi. 31. our Lord had gone into a desert place, apart, wishing for retirement, but a heedless multitude break in upon him, and he comes forth, instructs, and then miraculously feeds them (34—44).

(2) *The tenderness of love* displayed by our Lord's miracles.—Mark vii. 34. he sighed, &c. John xi. 35. he wept. Matt. ix. 2. 22. *Son*, be of good cheer. *Daughter*, be of good comfort. Our Lord's consideration is seen, Luke vii. 15. delivered him to his mother, though he might have required him as an attendant. Our Lord's condescension, in Matt. viii. 7. I will come and heal him, i. e. the servant of a Gentile. In healing the leper, Matt. viii. 3. our Lord disdained not to touch him.

Thus did he weep with them that wept, and condescended to men of low estate.

(3) *The expansiveness of his love.*—The Syro-Phœnician, a Canaanite (Matt. xv. 22); the Samaritan (Luke xvii. 16); the servant of a Gentile soldier garrisoned at Capernaum, to keep the Jews in subjection. Those who applied to him from wrong motives, Luke xvii. 11—19. The nine ungrateful lepers. His very enemies, when exercising violence against him, as Malchus (Luke xxii. 51), the servant of the High Priest.

And thus does he teach us to love mankind, and overcome evil with good.

The miracles of our Lord illustrate (4) *his wisdom and prudence.*—It was as an instruction to Peter that our Lord wrought a miracle (Matt. xiv. 29.) to support Peter on the water, and then allowed him to sink, to check that self-confidence which threatened his ruin (Luke xxii. 33). Our Lord's miracle (John vi. 12.) teaches us that command over abundance does not justify waste; and, compared with Mark vi. 39. instructs us in the duty of order as well as economy. The demoniac, restored to his right mind (Mark v. 18.), prayed our Lord that he might be with him; but our Lord says, Go home to thy friends, and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee. The inhabitants of the country where the demoniac lived, had besought our Lord to depart out of their coasts; but his wisdom and mercy alike appear, in leaving this memorial of his grace among them, to bring them to repentance. Our Lord's miracles never fostered indolence, but qualified for the discharge of the duties of life; none were ever raised by them above the station in which Providence placed them. This suggests to us, that whatever be our means, the wisest charity is that which helps people to assist themselves; and the miracle of paying tribute, by a piece of money

found in a fish's mouth, showed our Lord's command over all the treasures of the deep; yet more was not provided than was adequate to the present necessity: the motive of working this miracle was to avoid giving needless offence; suggesting a most important lesson to us,—if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. When dying, our blessed Lord wrought no miracle for the support of his aged and widowed mother, because the end could be better accomplished by ordinary means, though at the very moment he, in the pardon of the dying thief, showed his Divine power. When there was determined unbelief, our Lord wisely acted by the rule not to cast pearls before swine, Mark viii. 12. The Pharisees. Mark viii. 23—26. with Matt. xi. 21. Bethsaida. Luke iv. Nazareth (where our Lord wrought no miracles, because they had had the evidence of his character, as having lived thirty years among them), Luke xxiii. 8. Herod, are instances of this. He wrought very few miracles at Jerusalem in the earlier part of his ministry, and the wisdom and prudence of this appear in the effect produced at its close, by the raising of Lazarus (John xi. 47), which makes it evident, that not to have acted so would, humanly speaking, have hastened his crucifixion before his ministry was accomplished.

It thus appears, that in the principles which our Lord displayed in the exercise even of his miracles, there is much for our imitation.

The importance of making this use of the character of our Lord as an example to ourselves is strongly urged in Scripture (1 Pet. ii. 21; Rom. viii. 29. xv. 2, 3; Phil. ii. 5; 1 John ii. 6, iii. 2). It is also beautifully alluded to in the baptismal service of the Church of England as the very principle on which the education of her members should, from their earliest years, be conducted. See Exhortation to God-fathers and Godmothers, particularly that part beginning, "Remembering also that baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ," &c.

§ 2. THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Luke has been already referred to as the writer of this book, and his humility remarkably appears in this fact, that though probably attending St. Paul through the greater part of the period referred to in the Acts, he never mentions any thing in the course of his narrative reflecting credit on himself, though he is always spoken of by Paul in his Epistles with commendation. (Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11; see Prov. xxvii. 2.)

The Gospels close with a reference to the facts recorded in the Acts, particularly the promise of the Holy Spirit, of

which this book gives the fulfilment. (Luke xxiv. 47, 49; Mark xvi. 17; John xiv. 12—17.)

The Epistles also plainly suppose that those facts had actually occurred which this history relates. Hence appears the importance of the Acts, as a kind of postscript to the Gospels, and as an introduction to the Epistles, to the study of which it forms a most useful guide.—See *Paley's Horæ Paulinæ*.

As the Gospels are far from being a complete history of all our blessed Lord said and did, but rather memoirs illustrating his person and office, in connexion with the *rise* of the Christian dispensation, of which he is the great subject (Dan. ix. 24; 2 Cor. i. 20; 1 John v. 11); so the Acts are far from being a complete history of his Apostles, but rather such facts as illustrate the *establishment* of that dispensation; dwelling most largely upon that, which, as contra-distinguished from Judaism, formed its distinguishing feature, and against which the greatest opposition was made, the preaching among the *Gentiles* the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. iii. 8).

These remarks suggest the following division of its contents:

Ch. i. ii. point to the great foundation of Christianity, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Spirit; facts to which alone its progress in the world can be attributed, and on which alone the hope of its final triumph can rest. The foundation thus laid,

Ch. ii—ix. contain an account of the spreading of Christianity *among the Jews*, from A. D. 33—41.

Ch. x—xii. contain an account of the spreading of Christianity *among the DEVOUT Gentiles*; that is, among those Gentiles, who, like Cornelius, had before worshipped the one true God; together with its further progress among the Jews, A. D. 41—44.

Ch. xiii—xxviii. contain an account of the spreading of Christianity among the *IDOLATROUS Gentiles*, together with its further progress among the Jews and Gentile proselytes, A. D. 44—63.

A comparison of this book with the Epistles will throw great light on a subject of deepest practical importance, namely, the conduct of the first Christians. From their character, so brightly exhibiting the genuine fruits of Christianity, we may examine our own, “that we may all

be ashamed of what we have done, and of our iniquities and deviation from it."

The deity and office of the Son and Holy Spirit appear with great clearness in this book.

The *Divine nature of the Son*, our Lord Jesus Christ, appears in that he is the object of divine worship, by Stephen (vii. 59—60). Prayer to Christ is implied to be necessary to salvation (ii. 21). Ananias speaks of prayer to Christ as a distinguishing mark of being a Christian (ix. 14. with 1 Cor. i. 2). Peter speaks of Jesus Christ as Lord of all (x. 36). Compare also xiv. 23; xx. 32; also xx. 28. It is *very observable*, that the term "Lord," as applying indiscriminately to Jesus and God, is constantly occurring throughout this book. (Compare x. 36; ix. 34, 35. 42; xi. 16. 20, 21. 23, and particularly xiii. 2. 7. 10—12. 48.)

The *Divine nature of the Holy Ghost* is also clearly stated. Compare the third and fourth verses of chap. v. where the Holy Ghost is called God. The awful punishment of Ananias was for conduct which implied a denial of his omniscience. He whom Paul (ch. xxviii. 25.) speaks of as the Holy Ghost, Isaiah (Isa. vi. 9.) declares to be Jehovah. Illustrations of the personality of the Holy Ghost occur in ch. viii. 29; x. 19; xiii. 2; xvi. 7; xx. 28.

To see the reference in this book to the *office* of the Son, read over the book with this immediate reference, noting down the principal passages bearing on it.

The first general truth which will present itself is, that Jesus Christ is the great subject of the Apostle's preaching, being declared to be the great promise made to the fathers (iii. 24; xiii. 32; xxvi. 6). Thus (v. 42), daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Every where Jesus Christ is the subject of St. Paul's ministry. He began with it at his conversion (ix. 20. straight-way he preached *Christ*). Twenty-eight years afterwards, the last record the book contains of him (xxviii. 31), is that "he preached and taught those things which concern the Lord Jesus:" thus faithfully fulfilling the great purpose for which he had been chosen, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel (ix. 15).

Descending to the particulars of the office of Christ, we

see they preached Jesus as a Saviour (xiii. 23); that we are to look to him for remission of sin (ii. 38; iii. 19); for our full justification before God (xiii. 39), and a resurrection to eternal life. That these blessings are purchased to us by his sufferings (xvii. 3; xxvi. 23), as predicted by the prophets; and particularly by his death (xx. 28), the Church being purchased by his blood.

It is to be remembered, that in the Acts we have only sketches of the Apostles' discourses, the substance of the doctrines they taught being in the Epistles; but referring to Isa. liii. (by which Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian), we learn that Jesus "was wounded for our transgressions, that the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all; making his soul an offering for sin;" and that as he bare the sin of many, so he makes intercession for the transgressors.

Benevolent and pious Cornelius is a striking instance of the need all have of the knowledge of Christ. He must be brought to Peter, to hear words whereby he must be saved, (xi. 14), and observe the great topics on which St. Peter dwelt (x. 36, &c.), peace through Jesus Christ; his life, death, resurrection, &c. and the witness of all the prophets to the great doctrine of remission of sins, through faith in his name (x. 43).

We further learn, that while salvation is bestowed only on those that believe in Christ (iv. 11, 12), and that it consists in deliverance from the power as well as the guilt of sin (iii. 26; xxvi. 18), He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance (v. 31), and the Holy Spirit (i. 4; ii. 33, compared with Eph. iv. 8).

The office the Son has yet to sustain, as the appointed Judge of mankind, by which his great work as Mediator will be consummated, is again and again referred to in this book (iii. 21; x. 42; xvii. 31).

The *Office of the Holy Ghost* may be illustrated in the same way; a distinction being made between his miraculous and ordinary influences; the latter of which it more immediately concerns us to observe.

We may notice, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit *convincing of sin through the preaching of a crucified and risen Saviour* (ii. 36, 37, compared with John xvi. 8); thus leading the very murderers of our Lord to the entire surrender of themselves to his service.

His *enlightening the understanding*, as the teacher of

those already converted, appears in the altered state of the Apostles' minds. Even when our Lord ascended, they still clung to the hope of a temporal kingdom (i. 6); but never after the descent of the Spirit on that day did that delusion affect them (1 Pet. i. 4). So in the dispositions of the Church at Jerusalem, who are said to be filled with the Holy Ghost (ii. 4; iv. 31), is illustrated the office of the Holy Ghost, as the *Sanctifier and Comforter*. Their liberty from the fear of man, their union (iv. 32.), diligence in spreading the Gospel (viii. 4.), liberality (iv. 34; ii. 45), spirit of prayer, love for God's ordinances (ii. 41, &c), their joy in Christ, amid the severest sufferings for his name, were all the fruit of the Spirit. (See Gal. v. 22. compared with the facts recorded in the Acts.) Stephen's wisdom in argument, love for his enemies, zeal for God's glory, peace in death, he derived from being "full of the Holy Ghost" (vii. 55). In Barnabas, the son of consolation, are we directed to another, also said to be full of the Holy Ghost (xi. 24). Every instance of true conversion in this book is an illustration of the office of the Holy Spirit; whose great work is to apply to each soul the blessings of redemption, which the Son, by his obedience unto death, has purchased. This book is the history of the early triumphs of Christianity,—of the triumphs of that dispensation which is distinguished as the ministration of the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 8). Remembering the great encouragement our Lord has given us to seek the influence of the Holy Spirit (Luke xi. 13), and the blessings to which we have been called by baptism, let it be our prayer that we may daily increase in the manifold gifts of his grace, proving that ours is a *faith which worketh by love*.—See *Confirmation Service of the Church of England*.

§ 3. INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLES.

The Epistles contained in the New Testament are twenty-one in number; of which fourteen were written by St. Paul, three by St. John, two by St. Peter, and one each by St. James and St. Jude.

The practical improvement peculiarly to be derived from the Epistles has been already suggested, page 52.

They present us with enlarged views of (1) *The character and attributes of God*; of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. (2) *The character, condition, and duties of man*; being particularly copious in precepts, explaining and enforcing our duty to our fellow-creatures, in every relation in which we stand to them as princes and subjects (Rom. xiii.; 1 Pet. ii. 13), pastors and people (in the Ep. to Tim., Titus, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; Heb. xiii. 7. 17), husbands and wives (Eph. v. 22; Col. iii. 18; 1 Pet. iii. 1), parents and children (Eph. vi.; 1 Tim. v.; Tit. ii. 4), masters and servants (Eph. vi. 5; Col. iii. 22.; iv. 1; Tit. ii. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 18).

But chiefly the Epistles present us with enlarged views of the *Great work of man's redemption**. The Epistles are the complete development of those many things which, before our Lord's death, his Apostles were not able to bear (John xvi. 12); as, for instance, the spiritual nature of his kingdom; the doctrine of his dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification; and the call of the Gentiles, to make one and the same Church with the Jews, by the abolition of the ceremonial law. They particularly instruct us on the person and office of the Son as our Mediator, and of the Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier; and our duties to these Divine persons, as arising out of these relations, "the reverence, honour, love, trust, gratitude, fear, hope," which those relations in which they stand to us demand; and urging our relation to them as the great motive to the discharge of those duties we owe to our fellow-creatures—a subject already partially illustrated, page 59. See *Butler's Analogy*, Part 2, ch. i. p. 211; where he shews in what sense the essence of revealed religion consists in religious regards to the Son and Holy Ghost.

Two general remarks may here be made as a clue to our understanding the Epistles, and which it is the more important to make, because it is not the design of this little work to dwell largely on their contents; the subject being

* "The apostolical writings have this particular advantage, that they are a *divine and infallible commentary*, or an *authentic explication* of Christ's words in the Gospels, wherein the fundamentals of Christianity are admirably illustrated, and the mysterious parts of our holy faith more fully opened and explained than they were by Christ himself."
Leath.

considered too vast and difficult to find a place in that which is meant to be a first step to the Bible.

1. The first general remark regards the *nature of the writings*.

It has seemed fit to the infinite wisdom of the Holy Spirit, in this portion of his word, to instruct mankind—not in the form of regular treatises, but—in letters written indeed under his guidance, but often at the spur of the moment, and with immediate reference to the circumstances of those who were particularly addressed. A knowledge of those circumstances, therefore, as gathered chiefly from the Epistle itself, must be acquired, to obtain a just view of its scope. For this purpose, the plan recommended by Locke it seems important all should adopt who would attain a comprehensive view of truth. The plan of Mr. Locke was as follows—to read the whole Epistle through at a sitting, and to observe as well as he could the drift and design of the writer. “If the first reading (he says) gave me some light, the second gave me more; and so I persisted on, reading constantly the whole Epistle over at once, till I came to have a good general view of the Apostle’s main purpose in writing the Epistle; the chief branches of his discourse, wherein he prosecuted it; the arguments he used; and the disposition of the whole. This, I confess, is not to be obtained by one or two hasty readings; it must be repeated again and again, with a close attention to the tenor of the discourse, and a perfect neglect of the divisions into chapters and verses. The safest way is to suppose the Epistle has but one business and one aim, until, by a frequent perusal of it, you are forced to see there are distinct independent matters in it, which will forwardly enough shew themselves.”

2. The second general remark refers to a *prevailing error of the times*, which distracted the Christian Church.

This error was the very great difficulty which even the converted Jews had in believing that the Mosaic dispensation, so clearly founded by Divine authority, and especially the rite of circumcision, which from the very time of Abraham had been so solemnly enforced as necessary to salvation (Gen. xvii. 14), were no longer binding on all who hoped for acceptance with God; and that the Gentiles were ad-

mitted by the Gospel to equal privileges with themselves. The following passages, among many others which might have been taken, shew this to be a prevailing error of the times, and the importance of attending to it. Acts xv. 1, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved;" implying that salvation could be obtained nowhere but in the Jewish Church. See also 2 Cor. xi. 3; Gal. ii. 4; v. 1. 10. 12; vi. 12; Phil. iii. 2; Col. ii. 4. 8. 16; Tit. i. 10, 11. 14, &c. In fact, almost all of St. Paul's Epistles have some allusion to it.

The Epistles of St. Paul—viz. to the Romans; 1st and 2nd to the Corinthians; Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians; 1st and 2nd to the Thessalonians; 1st and 2nd to Timothy; Titus; Philemon; Hebrews.

THE prominent place St. Paul holds as the writer of fourteen out of the twenty-one inspired Epistles, renders some notice of him necessary, and which may serve as an introduction to his Epistles.

Paul was his Roman, Saul his Hebrew name. His history, as collected from different parts of the New Testament, and as given principally by himself, is as follows:—He was a Jew of Tarsus, a city of Cilicia (Acts xxi. 39), a free-born Roman citizen (Acts xxii. 28); a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee (Acts xxiii. 6); circumcised the eighth day; of the tribe of Benjamin; a Hebrew of the Hebrews (Phil. iii. 5); brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers (Acts xxii. 3; Gal. i. 14); being conversant also not only with Jewish but Greek literature (Acts xvii. 28; Tit. i. 12); and thus distinguished from the rest of the Apostles as a man of education and learning.

He is first mentioned in the New Testament (Acts vii. 58) as a young man at whose feet the witnesses laid their garments on the stoning of Stephen, consenting to that martyr's death (Acts xxii. 20). From Acts viii. and seq. it appears he took an active part in the persecution that followed the martyrdom of Stephen, but that, while breathing out threatening and slaughter on a persecuting errand to

Damascus (probably A.D. 35), he was miraculously converted (Acts ix. 3—8). He that was once a persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious (1 Tim. i. 13), became as ordained by the Lord, and instructed immediately by him (Gal. i. 1), a chosen vessel to bear his name before the Jews (Acts ix. 15), but more particularly before the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 46; xxii. 21; Gal. ii. 9). He continued thus labouring for thirty years, till, as is generally believed, he was beheaded by order of Nero at Rome, about A. D. 66.

Two particulars, respecting his history and character during this period, may be here noticed. He was distinguished—

First, by *zeal*. . . “labouring more abundantly than they all” (1 Cor. xv. 10). Secondly, by *knowledge*. . . “the abundance of revelations given to him” (2 Cor. xii. 7).

Macknight observes, “While the inspired epistles of the other Apostles deserve to be read with the utmost attention, on account of the explication of particular doctrines and facts which they contain, and of the excellent precepts of piety and morality with which they abound, the Epistles of Paul must be regarded as the grand repository in which the whole of the Gospel doctrine is lodged, and from which the knowledge of it can be drawn with greatest advantage.”—*Macknight, Prelim. Ess.* page 72.

In illustration of this it may be briefly noticed, that in the Epistle to the Romans is most fully declared the doctrine of original sin, and the way of man’s justification. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians is the most complete account of the spiritual gifts bestowed on the Church; in that to the Galatians, of the design of the Mosaic law. The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians are distinguished as presenting most exalted views of Christian privilege, as asserting with peculiar force the right of the Gentiles to be admitted to all the blessings of the Gospel equally with the Jews, and without submitting to the Jewish law. In the Epistles to the Thessalonians, especially as connected with 1 Cor. xv., are many particulars respecting the future judgment and the resurrection from the dead. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus contain the fullest account of the qualifications and duties of Christian ministers; while in the Epistle to the Hebrews is given the largest explanation of the typical intention of the Levitical priesthood, and of the

nature of Christ's priesthood, especially of his sacrifice and intercession. The Epistles of St. Paul contain no doctrines or duties which are not expressed or implied in the Epistles of the other Apostles, but, as in the instances above referred to, we have the same doctrines and duties, &c. more unfolded.

The Epistle to the ROMANS.

This Epistle was written about A.D. 58, and was addressed to the Church at Rome, which consisted partly of Jewish and partly of heathen converts. Its great design is to shew how as sinners we are admitted into the favour of God.

The Apostle proves the Gentiles and the Jews to be guilty before God; and having arrived at this conclusion, that "by the deeds of the law no human being can be justified," he then declares how we are justified; namely, "freely by the grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus," whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that He might be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. He confirms this view of justification, by shewing the agreement of the sacred writers on the subject; that Abraham was thus justified before God, not by works but of grace; adding the testimony of David to the same effect. He then proceeds to state the privileges of justification by faith, as flowing from the obedience of Christ; proving them to be far greater than the evils arising out of Adam's disobedience.

He then guards the doctrine from abuse, shewing that holiness is the necessary effect of justification; he again enlarges on its privileges, mourns over the state of his countrymen in rejecting, through self-righteousness, this doctrine; vindicates their rejection by God on this account; intimates, however, that this is not a final rejection, but a dispensation which shall ultimately issue in their salvation and God's glory. He then particularly dwells on the mercy of God as appearing in this mode of justification, urging it as the strongest motive to the entire dedication of themselves to his service in the diligent improvement of every Christian

grace, and the diligent discharge of every Christian duty. Recommending himself to their prayers, he concludes with various salutations.

Macknight's concluding observation on this Epistle is, that it is a writing which, for sublimity and truth of sentiment, for brevity and strength of expression, for regularity in its structure, and, above all, for the unspeakable importance of the discoveries which it contains, stands unrivalled by any mere human composition, and as far exceeds the most celebrated productions of the learned Greeks and Romans, as the shining of the sun exceeds the twinkling of the stars.

The First Epistle to the CORINTHIANS.

Corinth, situated on the isthmus which joins Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece, was, at the time when this Epistle was written, a place of extensive commerce, and the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. Its inhabitants were great admirers of eloquence, and of the vain philosophy then much cultivated; were filled with self-conceit, and notorious for their profligacy, which formed a distinguishing part even of their religion.

St. Paul's first coming to Corinth was about A. D. 51, when; as his general custom was, he attempted the conversion first of the Jews (Acts xviii. 4). But, finding them obstinate in their opposition to the Gospel, he turned to the Gentiles (Acts xviii. 6), out of whom the Church was principally formed, as appears from Acts xviii. and 1 Cor. xii. 2. His stay here was about a year and six months (Acts xviii. 11). But, shortly after his departure, the peace of the Church was disturbed by one or more false teachers, probably Jews (2 Cor. xi. 22), who endeavoured to draw aside the converts from Paul and his doctrines, by calling in question the authority of his mission, and ridiculing the plain and simple style in which he delivered his instructions. Hence arose divisions and other irregularities among the Corinthians, totally inconsistent with the genuine spirit of the Gospel; such as uncleanness, covetousness, litigation, feasting with idolaters in their sacrifices, want of decorum in public worship, particularly in receiving

the Lord's Supper; spiritual pride, on account of their miraculous gifts; uncharitableness, and by some even a denial of the resurrection.

To correct these abuses, and also to answer some questions which the Corinthians had in a letter proposed to St. Paul (in which letter, however, they had not mentioned the existence of those abuses; 1 Cor. i. 11—12; v. 1), was the design of this Epistle, which he wrote from Ephesus, and sent to Corinth by Titus, who was directed to bring an account to Paul of the manner in which it was received by the Corinthians. He preferred writing to coming, which was his first intention, on account of the severities which he would have been obliged to exercise.

A careful study of this Epistle, with reference to the character of the Apostle, will afford a fine illustration of the practical influence of those doctrines of grace which he taught: for instance, his awful sense of his responsibility as a minister, and his jealousy over himself (ii. 3; ix. 16. 27); his entire dependence for success on the divine blessing, yet diligent use of means (iii. 6—9; xv. 10); his prudence, fidelity, tenderness (iii. 2; vi. 12; iv. 14; 2 Cor. ii. 4); his humility, even while asserting his apostolic authority; though so distinguished by gifts, yet accounting them as nothing compared with Christian love (xiii. 1, &c.).

In such conduct is a pattern not only to ministers, but also to private Christians, in every age.

The Second Epistle to the CORINTHIANS.

This Epistle was written about a year after the first, and explains more at length the motives and feelings by which St. Paul was influenced in writing that Epistle (ii. 1, 2, 3. 9, &c.). It is addressed not merely to the Church at Corinth, but to the saints in all Achaia, the province of which Corinth was the capital.

The leading object of the Apostle seems to be, the further vindication of his apostolic authority, which the success of his first Epistle enabled him more fully to enlarge upon. He enumerates his labours and sufferings, appeals to his success and character among them, yet with

the most zealous care not to reflect glory on himself, but to establish them in those truths with which he had been entrusted by God for their salvation, and on the glory of which he particularly dwells.

But another point should not be overlooked in reading this Epistle, and that is the circumstances of the writer, as alluded to (ch. i. 8), and which probably refers to the riot occasioned by Demetrius (Acts xix.), which drove St. Paul from Ephesus. "Nothing," remarks Paley, in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, "could be more expressive of the circumstances in which the history (Acts xix.) describes Paul to have been at the time when this Epistle purports to have been written, or rather, nothing could be more expressive of the sensations arising from those circumstances, than this passage (i. 8). It is the calm recollection of a mind emerged from the confusion of instant danger. It is that devotion and solemnity of thought which follows a recent deliverance." And this seems to give a tone to the whole Epistle (iv. 8; v. 2; vi. 9; vii. 4).

This Epistle, as well as the first, displays the character of the Apostle in many interesting points of view. His intense affection for the Corinthians, as his spiritual children (1 Cor. iv. 14, 15), in Christ (2 Cor. xii. 15), his joy at their return to repentance, yet anxiety that it should be perfected among them who still inclined to the false teacher; the delicacy and address with which he exhorts them to a more liberal contribution (ix.), his astonishing labours (xi. 23, &c. *), taken in connexion with the deep sense he

* A striking illustration of the agreement of the Acts with the Epistles of Paul, is noticed by Paley, in this enumeration of the Apostle's sufferings:—

"St. Paul says, (xi. 24, 25.) 'Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods, thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep.' Of these no notice occurs in the Acts, as it was not the purpose of that book to give a history of all Paul's travels: but Paul also says, 'once was I stoned.' In Acts xiv. 9, and prior to the date of this second Epistle to the Corinthians, is an account of his being stoned at Lystra, but a violent attempt to stone him was made at Iconium, also prior to the date of this Epistle, which, the history informs us, he was enabled, by flight, to escape. Now, had the assault been completed, had the history related that a stone was thrown, as it relates that preparations were made, both by Jews and Gentiles, to stone him and his companions, or even had the account of this transaction stopped without

every where expresses of his insufficiency to think or to do any thing of himself (iii. 5); his humility in noticing his thorn in the flesh, and not till fourteen years after the event, mentioning the extraordinary mark he had of the Divine favour, in being caught up into the third heaven (xii.); with various other topics, on which it is not within the limits of this work to enlarge, may be very profitably followed out by the reader of this Epistle; while, interwoven with the whole, he will discover, even on the surface, the most important doctrines of the Gospel. Thus, while iii. 5, &c. shews us the inability of man; v. 21 shews the righteousness which God has provided for him; v. 9, 10, the diligence with which we must nevertheless labour in the great work of our salvation; vii. 1, instructs us as to the proper effect of the promises of the Gospel; v. 14, what is its great motive to obedience; xiii. 14, concentrates every blessing which language can express, or the heart of man conceive, as flowing to us from that love which leads us to love God.

The Epistle to the GALATIANS.

Galatia was not a city, but a province of Asia Minor, and derived its name from the Gauls, who (about 240 years B. C.) took possession of it by force of arms, and settled there. Its inhabitants were but imperfectly civilized. St. Paul visited Galatia about A. D. 51, and was the instrument of planting several Churches there. (Compare Acts xvi. 6; xviii. 23; and Gal. iv. 13—15.) From chap. i. 6. it would appear this Epistle was written not long after.

The subject of this Epistle partakes of the nature both of those to the Corinthians and of that to the Romans. Like those to the Corinthians, it involves Paul's vindication of his apostolic authority; in which he proves that he was taught immediately by Christ (i. 1), and was therefore on

going on to inform us that Paul and his companions were aware of their danger and fled; a contradiction between the history and the Epistle would have ensued. Truth is necessarily consistent; but it is scarcely possible that independent accounts, not having truth to guide them, should thus advance to the very brink of contradiction without falling into it."—Page 218.

an equal footing with the other Apostles. Like that to the Romans, it treats of the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, from which the Galatians, very soon after St. Paul had left them (i. 6), and greatly to his surprise, had been seduced by false teachers, who insisted that submission to the Mosaic law, and especially to circumcision, was necessary to salvation; probably insinuating, that whatever Paul might profess among them, he had himself at other times and other places urged the same doctrine. This the Apostle sharply (iii. 1, &c.), yet with tenderest affection (iv. 19), refutes, by shewing that the design of that law was not to justify, but to convince of sin, and lead to Christ; by faith in whom, Abraham, the father of the faithful, 430 years before the giving of that law, was justified (iii. 6, &c.); and that Paul himself, so far from having ever preached the necessity of the submission of the Gentiles to Jewish institutions, as circumcision, &c., was daily suffering the bitterest persecution from the Jews for preaching the contrary (v. 11).

He does not enter so much at length on the subject of justification by faith alone, as in his Epistle to the Romans, probably because the Galatians had had the previous benefit of his ministry, which the Romans had not. But he places the doctrine in a very striking point of view, by declaring "Christ is become of *none effect* to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." (v. 4.)

Let us then, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith; like the Apostle, glorying only in the cross of Christ (vi. 14); while our lives, exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (v. 22), prove that ours is that faith which worketh by love (v. 6).

The fickleness of the Galatians, as manifested in this Epistle, shews how little warmth of feeling in religion can be depended upon as an evidence of strength of religious principle. (See iv. 15, 16.)

The Epistle to the EPHESIANS.

Ephesus was a city of Ionia, and capital of Proconsular Asia; also famous for its temple to Diana, which was esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world. Its in-

habitants were noted for their superstitious arts (Acts xix. 18, 19), luxury, and lasciviousness. St. Paul preached the Gospel for a short time at Ephesus, about the year A. D. 53 (Acts xviii. 19—21), and in the following year returned and remained there more than two years (Acts xix. 1, &c.). He wrote this Epistle about the year A. D. 61, during the early part of his imprisonment at Rome. It consists of six chapters; the first three of which are usually considered as doctrinal, and the other three practical.

"Its scope is to establish the Ephesians in the faith, and to this end to give them more exalted views of the eternal love of God, and of the excellency and dignity of Christ. To shew them they were saved by grace, and that the Gentiles, however wretched they had been once, now have equal privileges with the Jews; to encourage them, by declaring with what stedfastness he suffered for the truth, and with what earnestness he prayed for their establishment and perseverance in it; and, finally, in consequence of their profession, to engage them to the practice of those duties which became them as Christians."—*Doddridge*.

The style of this Epistle remarkably shews the state of the Apostle's mind at the time of writing it—a mind transported with the unsearchable riches of God's wisdom and love, in the redemption of man, though at the very time his body was restrained by bonds and a prison: of this, his prayer for the Ephesians is a striking example (iii. 14, &c.). Yet, with a heart thus filled with heavenly things, his minute attention to relative and moral duties (iv. 28; v. vi. 1—9) is very observable, as also his resting the motive to every duty on the relation in which we stand to Christ (iv. 32; v. 2. 25; vi. 5) and the Holy Spirit (iv. 30).

This Epistle contains no blame or complaint whatever; and the distinguished faith and holiness of this Church, contrasted with its state a few years after (Rev. ii. 1—7), is a solemn warning to Christians in every age, of the fearful consequences of forsaking their first love (Rev. ii. 4).—See 1 Cor. x. 12.

The Epistle to the PHILIPPIANS.

Philippi was a city of Macedonia, and a Roman colony; and is distinguished as being the first place in Europe where

St. Paul preached the Gospel, probably about A.D. 51. (Acts xvi.)

The Philippians were greatly attached to St. Paul, and testified their affection by sending him supplies, even when labouring for other churches (iv. 15, 16; 2 Cor. xi. 9); and when they heard he was under confinement at Rome, they sent Epaphroditus, one of their pastors, to him, to minister to his wants (ii. 25; iv. 10. 14. 18). On the return of Epaphroditus, St. Paul, by this letter, written towards the conclusion of his first imprisonment (about A.D. 62), acknowledges their kindness. His leading object seems to be, while cautioning them against Judaizing teachers, to urge them to higher attainments in holiness (ii. 12; iv. 8) and mutual love (ii. 1, &c.); directing them to the wonderful condescension of Christ as their pattern (ii. 5); his righteousness as their only dependence (iii. 9); his grace as their strength (iv. 13); presenting his own example (iii. 17, iv. 9) to enforce his precepts.

Here again the tenderness (iii. 18), the dignity (iv. 11. 18), the humility (iii. 12), the disinterestedness of the Apostle, are very observable. He wrote this Epistle "weeping."

The remarks of Archbishop Secker on the character of St. Paul, as illustrated by this Epistle, are so very appropriate, that, though long, the writer cannot refrain from copying them. "As the excellent character of the first believers and teachers of Christianity are in general a strong recommendation of it to mankind, so that of St. Paul in particular shines with distinguished lustre throughout his whole history, but especially his Epistles, the faithful pictures of his soul. Even in this short one to the Philippians, it is surprising to observe how great a variety of most exalted and engaging virtues he shews. The authority of the Apostle is so perfectly tempered with the condescension of the fellow-Christian; the expressions of his tenderness for those to whom he writes are so endearing, and instructive at the same time; his acknowledgments of their kindness to him so equally full of dignity, humility, and disinterestedness; his mention of his past persecutions is so mild, and of his present danger (for he wrote in a prison) so cheerful; his attention to the supporting of their courage is so affecting, and his confidence that both he and they should persevere and conquer, is so noble and yet so modest; his deliberation whether life or death be eligible, is so calm, and his preference to live even in misery for their sakes and that of the Gospel, is so genuinely heroic, yet fully equalled by the composed and triumphant mention which he elsewhere makes of his approaching martyrdom; his zeal for propagating religion is so ardent, yet attended with so deep a concern that it be true religion; he is so earnest to guard them

both against a superstitious reliance on outward ordinances and a licentious abuse of the doctrines of faith and grace; so solicitous to improve them in rational piety and meek beneficent virtue, so intent to fix their minds on every thing worthy and amiable, and raise them above every thing gloomy and anxious: his warmth in this glorious cause is so far from being affected or forced, and every expression so evidently flows from a heart which cannot help overflowing, that whoever shall read this one Epistle with attention and fairness, under all the disadvantages of a translation made word for word and broken into short verses, will feel a strong impression on his mind that the writer of it must have been an uncommonly great and good man, every way deserving of the high rank which he claims, of a commissioned servant of God, and incapable of claiming it falsely."

The Epistle to the COLOSSIANS.

Colosse was a city of Phrygia, in Asia Minor, and in the neighbourhood of Laodicea and Hierapolis (iv. 13). The Colossians, having heard of St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome, sent thither Epaphras, a minister in their church, to comfort the Apostle, and to inform him of their state. Epaphras, shortly after his arrival at Rome, was also imprisoned. St. Paul therefore sends this Epistle by Tychicus and Onesimus, and at the same time he sent that to the Ephesians, to which this Epistle bears a near resemblance.

Its great subject is the glory of the person and office of Christ; on which he founds a caution (ii. 4), that being complete in Christ, they should be on their guard against subjection to Mosaic ceremonies or human philosophy, as though they could add any thing to the perfect work of Christ. On the same great and only foundation, the Apostle urges the discharge of every relative duty, so that whatever they did in word or deed, they should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

"Whoever," says Michaelis, "would understand the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, must read them together. The one is in most places a commentary on the other, the meaning of single passages in one Epistle which, if considered alone, might be variously interpreted, being determined by the parallel passages in the other Epistle."

The First Epistle to the THESSALONIANS.

Thessalonica was the chief city of Macedonia, and being a sea-port, was the constant resort of strangers from all

quarters. St. Paul established a church here, chiefly among the Gentiles. Great success at first attended his labours (Acts xvii. 4), but after a short stay, he was driven from them by the fury of the Jews (Acts xvii. 5—15). Attempting to return to them (ii. 18), but being hindered from the same cause, he, being then at Athens, first sent Timothy to confirm them in their faith, and to inquire into their conduct; and when Timothy came back, Paul, who was then at Corinth (Acts xviii. 5), wrote this letter; the leading object of which is to encourage them under their persecutions, particularly by a consideration of Christ's second coming, which he urges to comfort them under bereavement, and as a motive to holiness.

The Apostle's joy at their steadfastness, his tenderness of affection (ii. 7, &c.), his earnest prayer for them (i. 2), and earnest desire for their prayers (v. 25), are very observable. Highly as he commends them, yet, from the caution he still finds it necessary to give (iv. 3), we see the difficulty of escaping altogether from those vices which have been deeply rooted by education and habit.

This was probably the first of all the Epistles, and written about A.D. 52, or the 12th year of the Emperor Claudius.

The Second Epistle to the THESSALONIANS.

This Epistle breathes the same spirit of earnest affection and prayer which characterizes the first. It was evidently written soon after, and corrects a mistake of the Thessalonians, who, from some passages in that Epistle, imagined that the day of judgment was near at hand. In removing this misunderstanding, however, the Apostle introduces a very remarkable prophecy respecting an awful apostacy which should first come upon the Church, and adds various precepts, particularly with regard to their intercourse with those among them who walked disorderly.

The prophecy of St. Paul in this Epistle affords another illustration how the thread of prophecy is interwoven with the whole fabric of revelation; and evidently proceeds from the mind of Him who alone knows the end from the beginning. For the Apostle takes up a subject which Daniel 500 years before had introduced (Dan. vii. 25; viii. 25; xi. 36),

adding various particulars, but leaving it to St. John (Rev. xviii.) to perfect all that prophecy intended to communicate.

The three following Epistles—namely, the First and Second to Timothy, and that to Titus—are distinguished from the other Epistles of the New Testament as being addressed personally to Christian Ministers; but though of especial importance to them, as containing “a complete body of divinity, inspired ecclesiastical canons, to be observed by the Christian clergy of all communions to the end of the world,” these Epistles also contain general instructions for all, both regarding doctrine and precept.—See *Macknight*.

The First Epistle to TIMOTHY.

Timothy, to whom this Epistle was addressed, was a native of Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, in Asia Minor. His father was a Gentile, but his mother Eunice was a Jewess (Acts xvi. 1), herself the daughter of a pious mother. By her care he was from a child instructed in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. iii. 15); and is a remarkable proof of the blessing which attends such an education. He was of a sickly constitution (1 Tim. v. 23), but eminent for his gifts and graces (2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15; 1 Cor. iv. 17). When young, he was ordained a minister by St. Paul (1 Tim. iv. 12; 2 Tim. i. 6); and after being circumcised, not as a thing necessary to salvation, but to render him more acceptable to the Jews, he from that time regularly acted with that Apostle, both attending him personally, and being sent by him to other places. St. Paul, to whom probably Timothy owed his conversion (i. 1), always mentions him with the greatest affection, and joins his name with his own in six Epistles; viz., 2d of Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st and 2d of Thessalonians, and Philemon.

Timothy, having been left at Ephesus to regulate the affairs of the Church in that city, St. Paul wrote this Epistle to instruct him on that subject, particularly as to his choice of proper officers; describing their qualifications and duties, and how to regulate his own conduct and ministry, both in the refutation of error and the establishment of truth.

The Second Epistle to TIMOTHY.

This Epistle was written during St. Paul's second imprisonment at Rome, about A.D. 66. It derives a peculiar solemnity from its having been written just before the Apostle's martyrdom, and a peculiar grandeur from the feelings which he displays in the immediate view of that awful event. To him death appears already abolished (i. 10), and heaven open (iv. 8. 18); yet in no Epistle does he seem more impressed with the necessity of personal holiness, or more urgent to enforce it (ii. 19). "Imagine a pious father, under sentence of death for his piety and benevolence to mankind, writing to a dutiful and affectionate son, that he might see and embrace him again before he left the world, particularly that he might leave with him his dying commands, and charge him to live and suffer as he had done, and you will have the frame of the Apostle's mind during the writing of the whole Epistle."—*Benson's Preface to 2d of Timothy.*

The Epistle to TITUS.

Though Titus was so eminent as a Christian minister, he is not once mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. The few particulars which are known concerning him are gathered from the Epistles of St. Paul; from which we learn that he was a Greek or Gentile (Gal. ii. 3), probably converted from idolatry by that Apostle (Tit. i. 4). He is first mentioned as accompanying Paul and Barnabas, when they went up from Antioch to the council at Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 1). The attempt was made to oblige him to submit to circumcision; but as a Gentile, and therefore under very different circumstances from Timothy, St. Paul resolutely withstood it, as involving a compromise of principle (Gal. ii. 5). It is probable that Titus often attended the Apostle, being spoken of by him (2 Cor. viii. 23) as his partner and fellow-labourer. (See also 2 Cor. ii. 13.) But Crete was the chief seat of his labours, of which place he is often called the Bishop by ecclesiastical writers. Crete is a large island in the Mediterranean, and is now called Candia.

This Epistle has the same general purpose as the First Epistle to Timothy; Titus being left at Crete (Tit. i. 5) under much the same circumstances as Timothy was at

Ephesus. Mingled with his directions respecting the qualifications and duties of Christian ministers, the treatment of false teachers and heretics, and his own conduct generally, are the most important doctrines. Nor are the duties of the humblest ranks of life overlooked. Even slaves are called upon to *adorn* the doctrine of the Gospel by a holy example. It is particularly observable, that while referring man's salvation wholly to grace (ii. 11), to the free mercy of God through Christ (iii. 5), the Apostle urges this as laying us under the strongest obligation to holiness; the end of Christ's redemption being to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (ii. 14).

The Epistle to PHILEMON.

Philemon, to whom St. Paul wrote this Epistle, was an inhabitant of Colosse (Col. iv. 9), and, from verse 19, probably owed his conversion to the Apostle.

Onesimus, his slave, had run away, and wandered to Rome, where he met with Paul, then a prisoner there, through whom he was converted to Christianity. The object of this Epistle, of which Onesimus was the bearer, was to persuade his master to receive him back, not merely as a slave, but with feelings of esteem as a fellow-Christian. To accomplish this, the Apostle uses the most skilful address, touching with the greatest delicacy, yet with great force, on those points which were most likely to influence Philemon. We have here (as Paley remarks) the warm, affectionate, authoritative teacher interceding with an absent friend for a beloved convert; aged, and in prison, content to supplicate and entreat, yet so as not to lay aside the respect due to his character and office.

Beside the somewhat new point of view in which it presents the Apostle's character, the most important truths are implied in this Epistle. In the conversion of a runaway slave by one himself in prison, are displayed the wonders of God's providence and grace overruling evil for good; it also affords great encouragement to us, even when our means are most limited, to attempt to reclaim the wicked. The nature of Christian liberty is also illustrated. While Onesimus, as a Christian, became the Apostle's son, and Philemon's brother, this in no respect interfered with the civil

duties he owed to Philemon as his master (v. 12). Yet those in the highest station are taught by this Epistle to condescend to men of low estate, and especially to those who, however mean their station, are truly the disciples of Christ.

The Epistle to the HEBREWS.

This Epistle was written by St. Paul, about A.D. 62, to the converted Jews living in Judæa. He has not put his name to it, which, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, was peculiarly offensive to the unconverted Jews, hoping, probably, by this means, to remove an objection to their reading it.

He seems in this Epistle to have two leading objects :—

First.—To guard them against falling back into Judaism.

Secondly.—To comfort them under the persecution they were suffering, on account of their religious profession.

1.—The first ten chapters are chiefly employed in the first of these objects ; and to enter into the scope of them, consider, when a Jew gave up Judaism and embraced Christianity, what it required of him to *renounce* :—A ritual of much outward splendour, which he knew had been Divinely appointed by the ministration of angels, and which had hitherto honourably distinguished him from the rest of the world. All this he was to renounce as no longer essential. Consider, further, what he was called upon to *believe* :—That his temple and city were fore-doomed to destruction ; the customs which Moses, the most distinguished of prophets, had delivered, were to be changed (Acts vi. 14), and by whom ? Jesus of Nazareth—despised, rejected, crucified, by those who sat in Moses' seat.

To meet this state of mind, the Apostle establishes, by quotations from their own Scriptures (and which quotations form a very observable peculiarity of this Epistle), the Divinity of Christ, and therefore, that the dispensation thus introduced, was far superior even to that which had been by the ministration of angels. He shews, that the humiliation to which Christ had been subject, was a necessary part of what He came to do ; that as He was superior to Moses as a Mediator, so was He a Priest of a higher order than that of Aaron ; one established before that of Aaron, to which Abraham himself had owned submission ;

a priest after the order of Melchizedek, who united in his person the office of Priest and King ; and whose mysterious origin well typified the Divine nature of Christ. He further shews, and that from their own Scriptures, that the covenant of Moses was temporary ; that the sacrifices of the law were necessarily in their own nature insufficient, and being designed to be typical of Christ, were abolished by his coming. These arguments are interspersed with various earnest exhortations to steadfastness, and were directly of a tendency to guard them against those subtleties by which they would be tempted to apostacy.

2. In the eleventh and twelfth chapters his object seems to be to suggest such considerations as would tend to support them under their trials ; by pointing them to the great principle which had sustained those saints who had gone before them in suffering ; and also to the example and grace of Christ Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith. The thirteenth chapter concludes with various admonitions suited to their circumstances.

The Seven Catholic or General Epistles ; namely—of JAMES, PETER (I. II.) ; JOHN (I. II. III.) ; and of JUDE.

These last seven Epistles have, for many centuries, been termed "Catholic" or "General" Epistles, because most of them were addressed, not to particular churches or persons as those of St. Paul, but to the body either of Jewish or Gentile converts, dispersed over several countries.

"A wicked opinion having sprung up even in the Apostle's days, by misunderstanding Paul's arguments, Peter, John, James, and Jude, aimed in their Epistles principally at this end, to vindicate the doctrine of Paul from the false consequences charged upon it, and to shew, that a faith without works is nothing worth. But indeed Paul does not speak of faith at large, but only of that living, fruitful, evangelical faith, which he himself saith worketh by love. As for that faith void of good works, which these men thought sufficient for salvation, he declareth positively against it. Peter calls it wresting (2 Pet. iii. 16), because Paul was in truth of the same opinion with the other Apostles, and held eternal life impossible to be attained by any faith which had not the attestation of a holy life."—(*Augustine*, quoted by Macknight.)

The Epistle of JAMES.

In the catalogue of the Apostles, given by the Evangelists, we find two persons of the name of James, of whom one was the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, and the other was son of Alpheus or Cleophas (these are supposed to be the same name differently written, or different names for the same person). The latter James is the author of this Epistle. He was a near relation of our Lord (Gal. i. 19), and is called (Mark xv. 40) James the Less, probably to distinguish him from the other James, who was also called James the Great.

He appears (from Acts xv. 13. 19) to have presided over the Church at Jerusalem, and this is confirmed by ancient testimony. A reference to the following passages will further shew, the high estimation in which he was held (Acts xii. 17; xxi. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 7; Gal. i. 19; ii. 9. 12). His constant residence at Jerusalem rendered his situation one of great danger and difficulty, but he admirably united zeal with discretion, and was greatly revered for his devotion, and was termed by way of eminence, James the Just. He held his perilous situation of Bishop of Jerusalem, for about thirty years. But, called upon by the high-priest to harangue the people from the top of the temple, to dissuade them from becoming Christians, he took that opportunity of urging them to embrace the Gospel, upon which he was immediately thrown down, and either stoned to death, or despatched by a fuller's club (See *Burton*).

This Epistle was written not long before his death, and the destruction of Jerusalem. One of its intentions is, to encourage the believing Jews under their present and approaching sufferings. But its distinguishing feature is, that of reproof on account of an error, to which allusion has been already made, and into which many had fallen. The prevailing error which attended the introduction of the Gospel (and which Paul was appointed by the Holy Spirit to meet, especially in his Epistles to the Romans and Galatians), was that we are justified in part by works; as opposed to this, St. Paul shews that we are justified freely by grace through faith alone.

But now where the Gospel had been some time *established*, the tendencies of corrupt nature were to pervert it by over-looking the importance of works as a necessary evidence of saving faith. Many professing Christians, it appears, were guilty of partiality to the rich, contempt of the poor, censoriousness, envy, contention, covetousness, presumptuous disregard of God's providence, oppression, and luxury; and yet confident of salvation, because holding a speculative belief of the doctrines of the Gospel. To shew them the unsoundness of such a faith, the Apostle directs the force of his arguments; and from the very example of Abraham, by which St. Paul illustrated the doctrine of justification by faith alone, he proves, that it is of the very nature of *saving* faith to bring forth good works; and that if good works are not the result, though a man *say* he have faith, he has none which will profit to his salvation.

This Epistle may be considered as of the greatest practical importance, especially as a test of character to those who have long made a profession of religion. The vigour of Abraham's faith appeared in that more than twenty years after he was admitted into a state of justification before God, he displayed its continued practical influence in his readiness to offer up even Isaac at the command of God (Gen. xv. 6, with xxii. 9—12).

The atonement of Christ, though not dwelt upon in this Epistle, is implied. Such declarations as "whoso seemeth to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain" (i. 26); and again, "whoso offends in one point, is guilty of all" (ii. 10): forcibly shewing its necessity.

The First Epistle of PETER.

Simon, surnamed Peter by our Lord, was the brother of Andrew, and through him Peter seems first to have been introduced to the knowledge of the Saviour (John i. 41). Before he was called to be an Apostle, he was a married man, had a boat and nets, and a furnished house, and maintained himself as a fisherman. After he entered on the duties of his apostolic office, we see him distinguished

by ardent affection to our Lord, and a natural forwardness to speak on behalf of the rest (Mark viii. 29; John vi. 69); a forwardness of disposition, which however, at times, betrayed him into sin, and also so far forsook him, as to expose him to the charge of cowardice and dissimulation (Matt. xiv. 28—30; John xviii. 10; Matt. xxvi. 33—69; Gal. ii. 11). Peter was also on various occasions distinguished by our Lord. He was one of the three Apostles admitted by him to witness the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mark v. 37); the transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1); and the agony in Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 37; Mark xiv. 33).

In the narrative of our Lord's death and resurrection, St. Peter's fall and recovery form a deeply interesting and instructive part. Our Lord's compassion pre-eminently appears in that, as Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils, was the first woman; so Peter, who had denied him with oaths and cursing, was the first man to whom he appeared when he was risen.

After our Lord's ascension, St. Peter appears prominently in the earlier part of the Acts of the Apostles (i. 15; ii. 14; iii. 12; iv. 8; v. 3. 29; viii. 14; x. 5; xi. 3; xii. 3; xv. 7); and there is one fact in which he stands pre-eminently above the rest, namely, that, as on the day of Pentecost he was the first to preach the Gospel to the *Jews*, so also in his mission to Cornelius, the Roman soldier, he was the first to preach the Gospel to the *Gentiles*; and, in this sense, the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given to him, that he might be the first to unlock to mankind and open before them the unsearchable riches of Christ. These facts do not imply he had any supreme dignity or jurisdiction over the other Apostles: and Matt. xxiii. 8, Gal. ii. 11, plainly prove he had not.

No mention is made of St. Peter in the Acts after the council at Jerusalem, nor is any subsequent circumstance recorded of him in the Epistles, except that he was at Antioch not long afterwards (Gal. ii. 11). His ministry was chiefly among the *Jews* (Gal. ii. 7); and he is supposed to have preached to the *Jews* of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Proconsular Asia, and at length coming to Rome, about the year 66, to have been crucified with his head downwards, himself having

desired that his crucifixion might be in that manner. (See John xxi. 18, with 2 Pet. i. 14.)

This Epistle was probably written to both Jewish and Gentile converts scattered throughout Asia Minor, and is peculiarly characterized by energy and dignity. It is, as Ostervald remarks, one of the finest books of the New Testament. Its general design is to animate Christians to walk worthy of their exalted privileges, by well-doing to put to silence their adversaries, and also to suggest such considerations as would support them under those severe persecutions to which they were becoming more and more subject. This design naturally introduces the great doctrines of the Gospel, as the motive and guide to their conduct; he points out to them Christ, as the great foundation on which to build; his atonement foretold by prophets, the subject of the contemplation of angels, ordained before the foundation of the world; his glorious resurrection—ascension—gift of the Spirit; his continued care, as the shepherd and bishop of their souls; his example as a suffering Saviour; the obligations of their baptismal covenant; the awful solemnity of the last judgment. These are the great motives which, like his beloved brother Paul, he chiefly urges to patience and holiness, and like him also descends to the minute enforcement of every relative duty, while he gives the most exalted view of the privileges to which we are called as believers in Christ.

It is very observable, that, while the Scriptures represent idolatry as the greatest crime, pronouncing a curse on every one that makes flesh his arm (Jer. xvii. 5), they set no limit to our love to Christ; thus giving indirectly, as in this Epistle (see i. 8), the strongest proof of the Divinity of our Lord. This Epistle also teaches us that it was the Spirit of Christ which spake anciently in the Jewish prophets (i. 11), and particularly in Noah (iii. 19).

The Second Epistle of PETER.

As in his first Epistle Peter exhorted to patience under the tyranny of *persecutors*, so in this he exhorts to perseverance in the truths of the Gospel against the deceptions of *heretics*, and the profaneness of scoffers, describing their

character, and the certainty of their destruction, and urging, as the best preservative against their influence, diligence in the improvement of every Christian grace.

This Epistle, like that of St. Paul's second Epistle to Timothy, was penned when the writer knew himself to be drawing near to martyrdom; and it derives a solemn interest from such a consideration. It may be remarked, that while enjoying the highest anticipations of a glorious immortality, how important appears to him at such a moment *holiness*; and with what peculiar earnestness, as in the prospect of Christ's second coming, he urges it. On reading the views which are here presented to us of the perfections of God, the glory of Christ, the tremendous consequences of sin, the grandeurs of the coming judgment, we are naturally led to ask, whence had this poor fisherman such wisdom, but from God? Lardner observes, that Peter's two Epistles, with his two discourses in the Acts, and the multitudes who were converted by these discourses, are *monuments* of a Divine inspiration, and of the fulfilment of Christ's promise to Peter and Andrew, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

St. Peter, after a life of suffering, and in the immediate prospect of the agonies of crucifixion, rejoices in the choice he had made of the service of Christ. Let this encourage us to make that choice also. His last exhortation to the Christian Church is, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" and his last testimony is to the Divinity of his Lord: "To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." (iii. 18.)

The First Epistle of JOHN.

It is a remarkable fact, that the denial of the *human*, and not of the *divine*, nature of our blessed Lord, was the first error respecting his person, with which the Church was disturbed. To establish the Church, therefore, in sound views respecting the person and office of Christ, both of his human and divine nature, and also in his atonement, is one leading object of this Epistle. But, as is the case with all the inspired Epistles, not in the form of abstract discussion, but breathing a spirit of the most persuasive tender-

ness. St. John, particularly, enlarges on the love of God in redemption, urging it as a motive to holiness and mutual love. This Epistle is, throughout, especially useful, as offering many tests by which to try the reality of our Christian profession (ch. ii. 4. 5. 15; iii. 7. 15; iv. 13; v. 4. 18).

The Second Epistle of JOHN.

Of the thirteen verses contained in this second Epistle, eight are in substance found in the First. It is addressed to a woman, and a mother, particularly to guard her against the prevailing error of the times, respecting the person of our blessed Lord.

An Apostolic Epistle, so addressed, and on such a subject, would seem to imply the importance in the sight of God of the station of a Christian mother, the earnestness with which she should interest herself in the religious welfare of her children, and the encouragement which, by so doing, she will give to Christian ministers, and the progress of truth.

The Third Epistle of JOHN.

Gaius, to whom this Epistle is addressed, and who is probably the same as mentioned 1 Cor. i. 14, and Rom. xvi. 23, was an eminent Christian, particularly distinguished for his hospitality to those who went about preaching the Gospel. The Apostle expresses his affectionate joy at this and other evidences of his piety, cautions him against one Diotrephes, noted for his ambition and turbulence, and strongly recommends to his friendship Demetrius; referring other things to a personal conversation.

The Epistle of JUDE.

Jude, or Judas, who was surnamed Thaddeus, or Leb-beus, and was also called the brother (*i. e.* a near relation) of our Lord (Matt. xiii. 55), was the son of Alphaeus, brother of James the Less, and one of the twelve Apostles.

The design of this Epistle is to guard the Christian Church against those false teachers who had already insinuated themselves into it, and to contend with the utmost earnestness for the true faith, against the dangerous tenets which they disseminated, resolving the whole of Christianity into a speculative belief and outward profession of the Gospel. One of the perverse things which these corrupt teachers spoke, for the purpose of alluring the wicked, was, that God is so good that He will not punish men for indulging those natural appetites which He himself had implanted in them; nor be displeased with them for committing a few sins, which can do Him harm, but which are necessary to their present happiness. Wherefore, to show the impiety and falsehood of that doctrine, and to secure the disciples from being seduced by it, the Apostle Jude wrote this Epistle, in which, by facts recorded in Scripture, he proved that, as God had already punished the angels who sinned, notwithstanding their dignity, and the antediluvians, notwithstanding their numbers, so he will at length most assuredly punish all obstinate sinners in the severest manner.—*Macknight*.

QUESTIONS ON THE EPISTLES.

How many Epistles are there, and by whom were they generally written? (p. 240.)

Show their importance in instructing us in the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures. (241.)

On what subjects do the Epistles particularly instruct us? (241.)

What does Lowth say on this subject? (241.)

What plan does Locke recommend, to obtain a just view of the scope of an Epistle? (242.)

What was a prevailing error of the Christian Church at the time St. Paul wrote his Epistles? (242.)

Give some account of St. Paul, before and after his conversion. (243.)

By what was he distinguished? (244.)

In what light does Macknight say the Epistles of St. Paul are to be considered, as distinguished from the other Epistles? (244.)

Briefly illustrate this, by noticing some of the leading topics in each of his Epistles. (244.)

What is the great design of the Epistle to the Romans? What is Macknight's remark upon this Epistle? (245.)

Where was Corinth? What was the character of its inhabitants? (246.)

Give some account of the first planting of a Christian Church there, and of the state of that Church when St. Paul wrote his First Epistle.

What illustration does this Epistle afford of St. Paul's character? (247.)

What was St. Paul's leading object in writing his Second Epistle?

Under what circumstances did he write it? (248.)

What striking illustration does Paley give of the agreement of the Acts with the Epistles of St. Paul, as afforded by comparing 2 Cor. chap. xi. 24, 25. with Acts xiv. 9? (248.)

Where was Galatia, and in what respects may the subject of this Epistle be compared with that of the Epistle to the Romans, and those to the Corinthians? What doctrine does chap. v. 4. illustrate? (249.)

Give some account of Ephesus, and of the planting of the Church there. What is the scope of the Epistle? What can you gather from the Epistle as to the character of the Ephesians and of St. Paul? (250.)

By what motives does he enforce attention to moral duties? (251.)

Where was Philippi? Give an account of St. Paul's first visit there, and of the character of the Church, as described in this Epistle. Give the substance of Archbishop Secker's remarks on this Epistle, as illustrating the character of St. Paul. (252.)

What is the great subject of the Epistle to the Colossians? What is Michaelis's advice to the reader of this Epistle? (253.)

Mention some of the circumstances under which St. Paul wrote the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, and of his feelings towards them. (254.)

What remarkable prophecy is contained in the Second Epistle?

By what are the two Epistles to Timothy and that to Titus distinguished from the other Epistles? (255.)

Give some account of Timothy and Titus. What was the Apostle's frame of mind in writing the Second to Timothy, and how does Dr. Benson illustrate it? (256.)

In the Epistle to Titus, while referring man's salvation wholly to grace, what practical use does the Apostle make of this doctrine? (256.)

What was the occasion of writing the Epistle to Philemon? What important truths are implied in this Epistle? (257.)

What were the two leading objects of the Apostle in writing the Epistle to the Hebrews? When a Jew embraced Christianity, what was he required to renounce, and what to believe? (258.)

Show how the Epistle was framed to preserve such from falling back into Judaism. (258.)

Which are called the Catholic, or General Epistles? and what does Augustin say was one leading object of James, Peter, John, and Jude, in these Epistles? (259.)

Give some account of St. James, and of his Epistle, and of its great practical importance. (260.)

Give some account of St. Peter. (261.) What are the several designs of the First and Second Epistles? Mention Lardner's remarks on St. Peter's Epistles. (262.)

Give some account of St. John, and of the scope of his Epistles. (264, 265.)

Also of St. Jude, and the scope of his Epistle. (265.)

§ 4. THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

The Revelation, or discourses of things to come, contained in this book, were made by our blessed Lord to John, during his exile in the Isle of Patmos, and were published not long before his death, about the year 97.

The book may be divided into three parts. Ch. i. contains John's vision of Christ in glory. Ch. ii. iii. the seven letters addressed by our Lord to the seven Churches of Asia Minor. The remainder of the book, after presenting us (ch. iv.) with a description of the Lamb on the throne, and bringing to our notice the book of God's decrees as to future events, is occupied in showing the contents of that book, the subject of which is the state of the Church, from the close of the sacred volume till the consummation of all things.

The Epistles to the seven Churches afford the most important instruction to the Universal Church in every age, and may be profitably read by every Christian. But to afford, yet further, some general hints for the profitable reading of this invaluable book, which, as ages roll on, affords to each succeeding generation a brighter evidence of the divine origin of our holy religion, and of the gracious intentions of God to man, the following remarks from Lowth may be made:—

“An ordinary reader may receive great edification from those noble hymns offered up to God and Christ (ch. iv. 8—11. v. 9—13. vii. 12. xv. 3, 4); and may likewise discover many useful truths, such as the adoration of the one supreme God, in opposition to all creature worship (ch. ix. 20. xiv. 7. xxi. 8. xxii. 15); the relying upon the merits of Christ only for pardon, sanctification, and salvation (v. 9. vii. 14. xii. 11.); and that we ought to wait patiently for Christ's appearing and his kingdom, and in an earnest expectation of it; to continue steadfast in the profession of the true faith and practice of sincere holiness, notwithstanding all the sufferings which may attend a good conscience (xiii. 10. xiv. 12, 13. xvi. 15). All may learn those marks and characters of Antichrist, which it most nearly concerns us to take notice of, viz. pride, ambition, and affectation of worldly pomp and

grandeur (xiii. 7. xviii. 4); a cruel and persecuting spirit (ix. 21. xi. 7. xiii. 7—17. xvi. 6. xviii. 20—24. xix. 2), seeking to reduce others rather by force and compulsion than by reason and argument; the love of ease and softness, and a careless and luxurious life (iii. 2. xviii. 3—14); and that whosoever are guilty of these things, are so departed from the true spirit of Christianity; and surely he that takes warning from the plain and frequent admonitions of this book to avoid these sins, has not wholly lost his labours in reading it; and withal, has entitled himself to the blessing pronounced upon those who keep its sayings (Rev. i. 3)."

To those who would presumptuously intrude into those things which are secret, and belong to God, the remark of Sir Isaac Newton already alluded to, page 66, suggests a wholesome caution. To those who would trifle with the prophetic parts of this book, because of their mystery, the following considerations may not be without value:—"No prophecies in the Revelation can be more clouded with obscurity than that a child should be born of a pure virgin,—that a mortal should not see corruption,—that a person despised and numbered among malefactors should be established for ever on the throne of David. Yet still the pious Jew preserved his faith entire, amidst all these wonderful and, in appearance, contradictory intimations. He looked into the holy books in which they were contained with reverence, and, with an eye of patient expectation, 'waited for the consolation of Israel.' We in the same manner look up to these prophecies of the Apocalypse for the full consummation of the great scheme of the Gospel, when Christianity shall finally prevail over all the corruptions of the world, and be universally established in its utmost purity."—*Gilpin's Exposition of New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 428.

The conclusion of this book is deeply solemn, characteristic of the Gospel, as distinct from the law (ch. xxi. 21, with Malachi iv. 6, and John i. 17), and expressive of the design of the whole Bible, to point to Christ as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last (xxii. 13); and to invite mankind to take of the water of life freely offered through Him; that life of which the indwelling of His Spirit in our heart is the pledge (ch. xxii. 17; John vii. 37—39; Gal. v. 22, 23.); for without holiness no man shall see the Lord (Rev. xxi. 27).

CHRONOLOGICAL INDEX

TO

THE BIBLE,

REFERRING TO THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS RECORDED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, AND INCLUDING A PERIOD OF 4104 YEARS.

N. B. The true date of the birth of our Lord is four years earlier than the common era, A.D.

FIRST PERIOD.—From the Creation to the Flood, 1656 years.

B.C.		
4004	Gen. i. iii.....	The Creation. Man formed in the image of God, holy and happy—his fall—promise of a Saviour (Eph. iv. 24; 1 John iii. 8).
3875	— iv. 8.....	Cain murders Abel (1 John iii. 12. 15).
3874	— v.....	Seth born to take the place of Abel.
3769	— iv. 26.....	Enos born.—“Then began men to call on the name of the Lord.”
3382	— v. 18.....	Enoch born, the son of Enos, and the seventh from Adam (Jude 14).
3317	— 21.....	Methuselah, the son of Enoch, born.
3074	— 5.....	Adam dieth, aged 930 years.
3017	— 23, 24.....	Enoch, in the 365th year of his age, taken up to God (Heb. xi. 5).
2948	— 28.....	Noah born.
2469	— vi. 3.....	The flood threatened—Noah commanded to preach repentance and build the ark (1 Pet. iii. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 5; Heb. xi. 7).
2349	— vii. 11.....	Methuselah dies, aged 969, and the flood comes in the 600th year of Noah's age (Matt. xxiv. 37).

SECOND PERIOD.—From the Flood to the calling of Abraham.

2348	Gen. viii. 18, &c.	Noah leaves the ark—offers sacrifice—God's covenant with him.
2234	— ix.....	About this time Nimrod lays the foundation of the Assyrian or Babylonian monarchy—Nineveh and Babel are built, and mankind are dispersed by the confusion of their language.
1998	— ix. 28, 29.....	Noah dies, aged 950 years, 350 years after the flood.
1998	— xi. 32.....	Abram born, the younger son of Terah.
1921	— xii.....	Abram, at God's command, leaves Haran, and comes to Canaan, which is promised to his seed; as also that in that seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed (Heb. xi. 9).

THIRD PERIOD.—*From the call of Abraham to the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan.*

B.C.		
1920	Gen. xiii.....	Lot leaves Abram to dwell near Sodom.
1897	— xyl. 5.....	God makes a covenant with Abram—changes his name—promises Isaac—ordains circumcision as the seal of this covenant (Rom. iv. 11)—Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed—The Dead Sea the monument thereof to this day.
1896	— xxi.....	Isaac born 25 years after God's promise to Abraham.
1871	— xxi.....	God tempteth Abraham to offer Isaac.
1846	— xi. 10, 11.....	Shem, the son of Noah, dies.
1837	— xxv. 24.....	Esau and Jacob born twenty years after their father Isaac's marriage.
1821	— 7.....	Abraham dies, aged 175 years.
1817	— xi. 17.....	Heber, the fifth from Noah, dies; from him Abraham and his posterity were called Hebrews (Gen. xiv. 13).
1760	— xxviii. 10.....	Jacob, having obtained the blessing, flees to Mesopotamia.
1753	to	The twelve sons of Jacob born—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin.
1732	— xxxix.....	
1729	— xxxvii.....	Joseph sold to the Midianites, aged 17 years.
1716	— xxxv. 28.....	Isaac dies, and is buried by his sons Jacob and Esau.
1706	— xlv.....	Jacob goes with his family into Egypt in the third year of the famine.
1689	— xlix.....	Jacob dies in Egypt, aged 147 (Heb. xi. 21).
1635	— i.....	Joseph dies, aged 110 (Heb. xi. 22).
1577	Exod. i.....	Bondage of the children of Israel begins.
1574	— vii. 7.....	Aaron born.
1571	— ii.....	Moses born—adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Job probably lived about this time.
1531		Moses' flight from Egypt (Heb. xi.).
1491	— iii.....	Moses returns to Egypt, having received God's commission to deliver the Israelites—The plagues are sent—the Passover instituted—Their passage through the Red Sea and entrance into the wilderness, under the guidance of the pillar.
1490	— iii—xv.....	The law given—God's covenant with them made—broken by them, renewed by God—The tabernacle set up, and the Israelites condemned to wander forty years in the wilderness for their rebellion (Lev. i—xxvi.; Numb. i—xiv.).
1451	Deut. xxxiv.....	Moses dies, aged 120. Here ends the Pentateuch.

FOURTH PERIOD.—*From the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan to the building of the Temple.*

1450	Josh.	The Israelites, under Joshua, pass over Jordan. The gradual conquest of Canaan.
1443	— xxiii. xxiv.....	Joshua dies, aged 110 years.
1413	Judges xvii—xxi.....	Anarchy and confusion in the succeeding generation. Idolatry of the tribe of Dan and tribe of Benjamin nearly destroyed. The Israelites delivered up to captivity.
1045	—	Othniel, son-in-law of Joshua, delivers them, and after him various other judges, of whom Barak, Gideon, Jepthah, and Samson, are particularly noticed (Heb. xi).
1116	1 Sam. iv.....	The ark taken by the Philistines. Eli's death. Judicature of Samuel.
1035	— viii—x.....	Saul anointed king by Samuel.
1035	— xvii. 12.....	David born.
1005	—	— anointed king.

B.C.

1055	1 Sam. xxxi.	Saul kills himself in despair. David acknowledged king of Judah.
1048	2 Sam. v.	David anointed king over all Israel, after a civil war of seven years.
1035	— xi.	David's great sin.
1023	— xv.—xx.	Absalom's rebellion and death.
1015	1 Kings i. ii.	David's death. Solomon succeeds him.
1004	—vi. vii.	Solomon's temple, which had been seven years and an half in building, is dedicated with great solemnity and joy, God giving a visible sign of his favour.
	2 Chron. v. vi. vii.	

FIFTH PERIOD.—From the Dedication of the Temple to the Babylonian Captivity.

Most of the dates of this period will be found in the Table of the Kings of Israel and Judah, see page 174.

622	Nah. i.—iii. ...	Nineveh is taken and desolated by the Medes and Chaldeans.
-----	------------------	--

SIXTH PERIOD.—From the Babylonian Captivity till the coming of Christ.

569	Dan. iv. 29—33. .	Nebuchadnezzar deprived of reason for his pride.
538	— v.	Babylon taken by Cyrus, and the empire translated to the Medes and Persians, as foretold by the prophet, Isa. xlii.; Hab. ii.; Jer. xxv. 12; i. ii. With the fall of Babylon ends the Assyrian, or <i>First Universal Empire</i> .
	— v. 31.	
	— ii. 36—38. }	
	vii. 5. }	
		For the dates between this period and the close of the Old Testament history, see p. 179.
332	Sanballath builds a temple on Mount Gerizim.
332	Alexander the Great visits Jerusalem peaceably, is shown the prophecy of Daniel respecting himself. (Dan. viii. 7; xi. 13.)
330	Alexander overthrows the Persians, i. e. the <i>Second Universal Empire</i> , and establishes the <i>Third Universal Empire</i> , that of the Macedonian, or Grecian. (Dan. xi. 39; vii. 6; xi.)
277	The Old Testament translated out of the original Hebrew into the Greek language.
170	Antiochus Epiphanes' cruel treatment of the Jews.
165	Judas Maccabeus' restoration of the daily sacrifice, and purification of the temple.
63	Jerusalem taken by the Romans under Pompey. The Roman, or <i>Fourth Universal Empire</i> .
40	Herod the Great declared king of the Jews.
A.D.		
4	Matt. ii. Luke ii.	Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, born at Bethlehem, four years earlier than the common reckoning, Anno Domini.

SEVENTH PERIOD.—From the Birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to the end of the first century.

8	Luke ii.	Jesus attends the Passover at Jerusalem with his parents.
26	Pilate sent from Rome to Judea as governor.
27	John the Baptist begins his ministry. Jesus is baptized. Ministry of Christ extends about three or four years.
33	Jesus Christ is crucified, his resurrection, ascension, and descent of the Spirit.

A.D.		
35	Acts ix.	Conversion of St. Paul.
41	x. xi.	St. Peter baptizes Cornelius, the first convert from the devout Gentiles.
45-49	xiii. xiv. } xv. 30-35. ... }	St. Paul's first apostolic journey, chiefly to the idolatrous Gentiles.
50-55	xv. 36 } xviii. 22 }	second ditto.
55-58	xviii. 23.	third ditto; which he is prevented from completing by his imprisonment afterwards.
61	xxvi. xxviii.	sent a prisoner to Rome.
67	and probably St. Peter, suffer martyrdom at Rome.
71	Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans, as foretold by Christ.
96	St. John banished by Domitian to the isle of Patmos, where he writes the Book of Revelation.
		after the death of Domitian, returns to Ephesus.
		dies, about 100 years old. He was the last surviving Apostle, and is believed to have been the only one that died a natural death.
		N. B. For the dates when the several Books of the New Testament were written, see p. 274.

Of the events since the close of the Holy Scripture, bearing on the progress of revealed truth, the dates of the following may be noticed:

107	Persecution of Christians, and Martyrdom of Ignatius at Rome.	papal prince, and assumes infallibility.
138	The Britons supposed to have received Christianity about this time, if not before.	787 The worship of images authorized by the second council of Nice.
193		820 Claude, Bishop of Turin, opposes popery.
93	Decline of the Roman Empire.—	1095 The crusades.
to	There were about 20 Emperors and 30 Usurpers in this period.	1160 The Waldenses zealously oppose popery.
274	A severe persecution of Christians, which lasted 10 years.	1383 Wickliffe translates the Scriptures into English.
303		1414 Bohemians oppose popery; John Huss and Jerome of Prague burnt.
323	Christianity established by Constantine.	1453. The Turks take Constantinople.
325	The first general council is held at Nice.	1517 Commencement of reformation by Luther.
361	Julian the Apostate re-establishes paganism.	1546 Edward VI.; Council of Trent begins.
395	Theodosius promotes Christianity.	1553 Mary; Persecution of the reformed Religion.
476	The Roman Empire subverted and divided into 10 kingdoms.	1588 Defeat of the Spanish Armada.
597	Augustin, the monk, arrives in England.	1605 The gunpowder plot discovered.
606	Boniface III., Bishop of Rome, procures the title of Universal Bishop from the Emperor Phocas.	1688 Accession of William III., and deliverance thereby of our church and nation from popish dominion and arbitrary power.
	About this time Mahomet commences his imposture in the East.	
756	The Pope established as a tem-	

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

OF THE BOOKS OF

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Book.	Author.	Where written.	For whose immediate use.	Date.
Matthew, Gospel of } in Hebrew. }	Matthew	Judea.....	Hebrew Christians.....	33
1 Thessalonians.....	Do.....	Corinth.....	Do chiefly.....	52
2 Thessalonians.....	Paul.....	Do.....	Do.....	52
Galatians.....	Do.....	Do.....	Do.....	53
1 Corinthians.....	Do.....	Ephesus.....	Do.....	56
Romans.....	Do.....	Corinth.....	Do.....	58
2 Corinthians.....	Do.....	Macedonia.....	Do.....	58
Matthew, Gospel of } in Greek... }	Matthew	Judea.....	Gentile Christians.....	61
James.....	James...	Judea.....	Jewish Nation, but chief- } ly Jewish Christians... }	61
Mark, Gospel of.....	Mark...	Rome.....	Gentile Christians.....	61
Ephesians.....	Paul.....	Do.....	Do.....	61
Colossians.....	Do.....	Do.....	Do.....	62
Philippians.....	Do.....	Do.....	Do.....	62 to 63
Philemon.....	Do.....	Do.....	Philemon.....	63
Hebrews.....	Do.....	Italy.....	Hebrew Christians.....	63
Luke, Gospel of.....	Luke.....	Greece.....	Theophilus and Gentile } Christians..... }	63 or 64
Acts.....	Do.....	Do.....	Do.....	64
1 Timothy.....	Paul.....	Macedonia...	Timothy.....	64
Titus.....	Do.....	Do.....	Titus.....	64
1 Peter.....	Peter...	Babylon, } or Rome. }	Christians in general, } throughout the coun- } tries mentioned in the } inscription..... }	64
Jude.....	Jude.....	Christians in general.....	64
2 Peter.....	Peter...	Babylon, } or Rome. }	Do.....	66
2 Timothy.....	Paul.....	Do.....	Timothy.....	66
1 John, Epistle of.....	John.....	Ephesus.....	General.....	68
2 John do.....	Do.....	Do.....	The Elect Lady.....	69
3 John do.....	Do.....	Do.....	Gaius.....	69
Revelation.....	Do.....	Patmos.....	General.....	97
John, Gospel of.....	Do.....	Ephesus.....	Do.....	98

Learned men have differed about the exact dates, but in the above, those assigned by T. H. Horne have been chiefly followed.

PRAYERS.

FOR THE TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S WORD.

OH LORD, as Thou alone art the Author of the Holy Scriptures, so likewise can no man, although he be never so wise, politic and learned, understand them, except he be taught by Thy Holy Spirit, which alone is the schoolmaster to lead the faithful unto all truth. Vouchsafe, therefore, I most humbly beseech Thee, to breathe into my heart Thy blessed Spirit, which may renew the senses of my mind, open my wits, reveal unto me the true understanding of Thy holy mysteries, and plant in me such a certain and infallible knowledge of Thy truth, that no subtle persuasion of man's wisdom may pluck me from Thy truth; but that, as I have learned the true understanding of Thy blessed will, so I may remain in the same continually, come life, come death; unto the glory of Thy blessed name. Amen.
King Edward VI.—Primer.

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them; that by patience, and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

FOR A LIFE AGREEABLE TO OUR KNOWLEDGE.

As I have prayed unto Thee, oh Heavenly Father, to be taught the true understanding of Thy blessed Word, by Thy Holy Spirit, so I most entirely beseech Thee to give me grace to lead a life agreeable to my knowledge. Suffer me not to be of the number of those which profess that they know God with their mouth, but deny Him with their deeds. Let me not be like unto that son which said unto his father, that he would labour in his vineyard, and yet laboured nothing at all, but went abroad loitering idly. Make me rather like unto that good and fruitful land which yieldeth again her seed with great increase, that men, seeing my good works, may glorify Thee, my Heavenly Father. Amen.—*King Edward VI.—Primer.*

A PRAYER PREFIXED TO SOME EDITIONS OF THE EARLY
ENGLISH VERSIONS.

O GRACIOUS God and most merciful Father, which hast vouchsafed us the rich and precious jewel of Thy holy word, assist us by the Spirit, that it may be written in our hearts, to our everlasting comfort, to reprove us, to renew us, according to Thine own image; to build us up, and edify us, unto the perfect building of Thy Christ; sanctifying and increasing in us all heavenly virtues. Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PRAYERS.

THY hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments. The entrance of Thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple. Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law (Ps. cxix. 73. 130. 18).

Order my steps in Thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes; then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all Thy commandments. I will run the way of Thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart (Ps. cxix. 135. 5, 6. 32).

See also pages 137, 31, suggesting other topics for prayer.

HYMN.

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL.

ISRAEL, in ancient days,
Not only had a view
Of Sinai in a blaze,
But learn'd the Gospel too;
The types and figures were a glass,
In which they saw a Saviour's face.

The paschal sacrifice,
 And blood-besprinkled door¹,
 Seen with enlighten'd eyes,
 And once applied with power,
 Would teach the need of other blood
 To reconcile an angry God.

The Lamb, the Dove, set forth
 His perfect innocence²,
 Whose blood of matchless worth
 Should be the soul's defence;
 For he who can for sin atone
 Must have no failings of his own.

The scape-goat on his head³
 The people's trespass bore,
 And to the desert led,
 Was to be seen no more :
 In him our Surety seem'd to say,
 " Behold, I bear your sins away."

Dipt in his fellow's blood,
 The living bird went free⁴;
 The type well understood,
 Express'd the sinner's plea;
 Described a guilty soul enlarged,
 And by a Saviour's death discharged.

Jesus, I love to trace,
 Throughout the sacred page,
 The footsteps of thy grace,
 The same in every age !
 O grant that I may faithful be
 To clearer light vouchsafed to me !

COWPER.

¹ Exod. xii. 13.

² Lev. xii. 6.

³ Lev. xvi. 21.

⁴ Lev. xiv. 51—53.

INDEX.

Acts of the Apostles, remarks on the book of, page 236.

—, harmony with Epistles of St. Paul illustrated, 248.

—, deity and offices of the Son and Holy Spirit, as illustrated by, 238.

Affliction, view of to be derived from book of Genesis, 147.

Ala, different senses in which used in Scripture, 79.

Amos, remarks on the book of, 204.

Angel of Jehovah, to whom it refers in the Old Testament, 41. 151.

Antichrist, practical view of, 268.

Apocrypha, no part of the word of God, 6.

Apostles, the travels of, as gathered chiefly from profane history, 96.

Arabians, prophecy respecting, 28.

Asia, meaning of the term in the New Testament, 84.

Atonement, day of, 130. 154.

— of Christ, the dignity it reflects on the sacrifices of the law, 153.

Augustin quoted, 192. 259.

Babylon, prophecy respecting, 22.

Balaam, a striking instance of self-deceit, 46.

—, history of, illustrating the importance of comparing Scripture with Scripture, 76.

Beard, esteem for it in Eastern countries, 101.

Bellarmin, Cardinal, by what Scripture justifying the putting heretics to death, 108.

Bible, questions on its divine authority, 32.

—, disposition in which it should be read, 31.

Bible, texts quoted by Bishop Butler on the same subject, 3.

—, notice respecting writers of, 8.

—, its regard to truth, 11. 35. 225.

—, love, 12. 136.

—, holiness, 16.

—, supreme regard to God's glory, 14. 163.

—, value of in enabling us to trace events to their moral causes, 42.

—, harmony of its doctrines with its facts, illustrated by a comparison of Old and New Testament respecting the Messiah, 52.

—, danger of quoting detached passages of Scripture, 72.

—, fanciful interpretation of, 69. 108.

—, its style popular, not philosophical, 80. 12.

—, its estimate of things highly esteemed among men, 145.

—, its sufficiency for salvation, 137. 231.

Biography of Scripture, an illustration of principles, 44.

Blomfield, Bishop, suggestion for the profitable reading of Scripture, 140.

Blood, different senses in which the term is used in Scripture, 77.

Boyle, on the style of Scripture, quoted, 109.

Butler, Bishop, quoted, 3. 35. 36. 39. 87.

Canaanites, on the destruction of, 159.

Cecil's rule for the interpretation of Scripture, 108.

Christ, prophecies respecting, 30.

—, spoken of in the Old Testament under the name of David, and why, 81. 200.

—, Angel of Jehovah refers to, 151.

- Christ*, mediation of, the great subject of the Bible, 38. 151.
 —, ministry of, a course of education to his disciples, 222.
 —, remarks on the character of, 234.
 —, example of, to be made the foundation of education, 236.
 —, divine nature and office of, as illustrated in the Acts, 238.
 —, Deity implied, in that no limit is set to the love of, 263.
Chronicles, remarks on the books of, 172.
Chronology, its use in the interpretation of Scripture, 92.
 —, of the Bible, 93. 270.
Chrymston, on the interpretation of parables, 70.
Church of God, the Bible chiefly a history of, 139.
 —, under every dispensation, the faith of the same, 184. 209.
Civilization, unable to rescue men from idolatry, 84. 96. 246.
Colossians, remarks on the Epistle to, 253.
Commandments, the Ten, Archbishop Secker's rules for their interpretation, 61.
Contract, importance of observing, 72.
Corinthians, remarks on the Epistles to, 246.
Covenant, the term explained, 77.
 —, new, shadowed forth in the Old Testament, 151.
Counterfeit virtues, 147.
Cramer's Hymn on Old Testament Gospel, 276.
Daniel, remarks on the book of, 200.
David, his punishment a solemn declaration of God's anger against sin, 167.
 —, his knowledge of Christ, 168.
 —, Christ spoken of under the name of, 200.
Davison, on Prophecy, quoted, 202. 218.
Dedication, feast of, referred to, 131.
Deuteronomy, remarks on the book of, 156.
Difficulties of Scripture, their chief origin, 105.
 —, their use, 107.
 —, some explained, 84. 93. 105.
Dispensation, Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian compared, 51.
Doctrines of Scripture, their practical object, 58.
Dress of Eastern countries, 98.
Ecclesiastes, remarks on the book of, 191.
Egypt, prophecy respecting, 92.
Elijah and Elisha, ministry of, in what light to be viewed, 171.
Ephesians, remarks on the Epistle to, 250.
Epistles, Locke's rule for the interpretation of the, 242.
 —, of St. Paul, by what distinguished, 244.
 —, questions on the, 266.
Epochs, the term explained, and some of the most remarkable given, 93.
Error, its chief sources in religion, —, from a wrong state of the heart, 3. 105.
 —, and from a disregard of the sufficiency of Scripture, 137.
 —, the principles of every, confuted in Scripture, 231.
 —, danger of, 231.
Essenes, 136.
Esther, remarks on the book of, 178.
Example, Scripture instructs us by, 44. 154. 247.
 —, cautions and directions in the application to ourselves of those of Scripture, 57.
 —, of our Lord, 234.
Exodus, remarks on book of, 149.
Ezekiel, do. 198. 92.
Faith, different senses in which used in Scripture, 78.
 —, justification by does not weaken the obligation to good works, 56.
 —, essentially the same in every age, 184.
 —, man responsible for him, 228.
Festivals of the Jews, their moral use, 153.

Festivals of the Jews, our Lord's observance of one not of divine appointment, 131.

Figures of Scripture, remarks on, 63.
—, practical use of, 91.

Flesh, different senses of the term, 78.
Fuller quoted, 144.

Galatians, remarks on the Epistle to, 249.

Galileans, account of, 136.

Gemara, the term explained, 133.

Genealogies of Scripture, their use, 94. 173.

Genesis, remarks on the book of, 139.
—, illustrations from, as to the

great purpose of the Bible, 36. 139.

Gentile world, influence of the Jews upon it, 51. 85. 92. 202.

—, its moral state at the coming of our Lord, 219.

Geography of the Holy Land, 88.

Gilpin quoted, 269.

God, nature and attributes of gradually revealed, 40. 140.

—, just view of, derived only from Scripture, 54.

—, value of the favour of, illustrated, 146.

—, standard of our duty the imitation of his perfections, 14.

—, motives to duty from consideration of the attributes of, 142.

Gospels, remarks on, 222.

Grace, different senses of the term, 78.

— of God, examples of its effects, 44. 154.

Graves on the Pentateuch, quoted, 124.

Greeks, *Greeks*, meaning of the terms, as used in Scripture, 84.

Habakkuk, remarks on the book of, 209.

Haggai, do. 210.

Hales' Chronology quoted, 85.

Hall, Bishop, quoted, 110. 150. 179.

Hebrews, remarks on the Epistle to, 258.

Herodians, tenets and character of, 136.

High Priest, the office, &c. of, explained, 122.

History Bible, object of, 35. 143. 158.
—, information respecting

mankind which it alone gives, 8.

History, profuse, light it throws on that of the Bible, 85.

—, *natural*, allusions to, in Scripture, 90.

Holy Spirit, his assistance necessary to our understanding the Bible, 31.

—, references to, in the Old Testament, 36. 37. 41. 195. 204.

—, facts in do., illustrating man's need of his influences, 145. 150. 166.

—, Deity, Personality, and office of, 239.

Hooker quoted, 57. 107.

Horne, Bishop, quoted, 2. 45. 169. 185.

Horne, T. H., referred to, 97. 106.

Horsley, Bishop, quoted, 21. 108. 109.

Hosea, remarks on the book of, 202.

Human nature, general view of, 46.
— *life*, &c., view of, 146.

Humility, illustrations of, in the Sacred writers, 12. 225. 236. 249.

Hurd, Bishop, on the Prophecies, quoted, 30.

Idolatry, tendency of mankind to return to, wherever the circulation of the Scriptures is checked, 34.

—, the history and government of the Jews, intended by God to be a continual protest against, 112.

—, God's abhorrence of, yet no caution in Scripture against loving Christ too much, and why, 263. 75.

Inspiration, definition of, 11.

Institutions, positive, duty of observing, 62.

Interpretation of the Bible, questions on, 110.

Isaiah, remarks on the book of, 194.

Ishmael, prophecy relating to, 28.

Ites, meaning of the term, in Scripture, 83.

James, remarks on the Epistle of, 280.

Jehovah, meaning of the term, 41.

—, title given by the prophets to the Messiah, 197.

Jeremiah, remarks on the book of, 196.

Jewel, Bishop, quoted, 2. 6. 109.

- Jews*, preservation of, proof of the divine authority of the Bible, 25.
 —, purpose for which selected by God, 111.
 —, their influence on the Gentile world, 51. 85. 92. 176. 202.
 —, questions on the government of, 119.
 —, feasts of, 127, and their use, 153.
 —, sacrifices of, 120.
Job, remarks on the book of, 182.
Joel, do. 204.
John, Gospel of, remarks on, 229.
John, Epistles of, remarks on, 264.
Jonah, remarks on the book of, 206.
Joshua, do. 159.
Jubilee, 118.
Jude, remarks on Epistle of, 265.
Judges, remarks on the book of, 161.
Justification before God, view given by St. Paul, 245.

Keith, on prophecy, quoted, 28.
Kings, remarks on the books of, 168.
 —, reigns of those of Judah and Israel, 174.
Knowledge of God the foundation of all right in religion, 54.
 — revealed in Christ, 43.

Lamentations of Jeremiah, remarks on the book of, 198.
Lampe quoted, 108.
Law, different senses in which the term is used in Scripture, 79. 138.
 — Mosaic: see Mosaic Law.
 — of God, holiness of, 14. 145.
Lawyers, term as used in the New Testament explained, 133.
Leslie's marks of a real miracle, 18.
Levi, remarks on the tribe of, 122. 124.
Leviticus, remarks on the book of, 153.
Locke quoted, 149. 242.
Lowth quoted, 12. 75. 230. 260.
Luke, remarks on the Gospel of, 228.
Luther, on the interpretation of Scripture, quoted, 107.

Macknight quoted, 224. 242. 244. 259.
Mages, Archbishop, quoted, 122. 224.
Malachi, remarks on the book of, 212.
Man, his state by nature, 33. 35. 47.
 —, illustration of his liability to sin, 45. 143. 206.
 —, need of salvation, 162.
 —, responsible for his belief, 228.

Map, illustration of its use from the history of Abraham and St. Paul, 85.
Mark, remarks on the Gospel of, 226.
Marsh, Bishop, quoted, 68. 133.
Matthew, remarks on the Gospel of, 224.
Melancthon, on the interpretation of Scripture, quoted, 107.
Micah, remarks on the book of, 207.
Miracles, definition of, 17.
 —, Leslie's marks of a real, 18.
 — of Moses, 18. 150.
 — of our Lord, as illustrative of his character, 234.
 — do not alter the principles upon which God acts, 43.
Mishna, term explained, 138.
Months, Jewish, 128.
Morality of Scripture built on its doctrines, 59. 189.
Mosaic Law, questions on, 119.
Moses, character of, as illustrated by his writings, 11. 12.
 —, miracles of, 18. 150.
 — and Joshua compared, 160.
 —, mediation of, typical of that of Christ, 151.
 —, proofs of divine legation of, 20. 119. 131.
Mosheim quoted, 107.
Motives, importance of observing those urged in Scripture, 142. 189.
 —, God's regard to, as illustrated in Jehu, 46.
 —, derived from the attributes of God, 14. 142.
 —, considerations of temporal good urged in Scripture, 142.
 —, regard to Christ and the Holy Spirit, the distinguishing feature of Christian, 241. 249. 263.
Mysteries of religion, illustration of their practical use, 56.

Nahum, remarks on book of, 206.
Names, Proper, of Scripture, their significant meaning, 82.
Nazarites, 135.
Nehemiah, remarks on the book of, 177.
Nethinims, assistants to Levites, 194.
New Moon, feast of, 128.
Newton, Bishop, quoted, 26. 83.
 —, Sir Isaac, on unfulfilled prophecy, 66.

New Testament, its connexion with the Old, 52.

Nineveh, prophecy respecting, 22.

Noah, prophecy of, 28.

Numbers, remarks on the book of, 154.

Obadiah, remarks on the book of, 205.

Old Testament, its great object to make men wise unto salvation, 35.

—, typical nature of its history illustrated from the book of Genesis, 143.

—, prepared for the coming of Christ, 48. 52. 150. 156. 165. 168.

—, harmony of with the New illustrated, 53. 163. 277.

—, temporal promises of, how far applicable to us, 60.

Paley quoted, 248.

Parables, interpretation of, 68.

—, why our Lord spoke in, 223.

Pascal quoted, 95.

Passover, the feast of, 129. 151. 172.

Patriarchal Dispensation, remarks on, 50.

Patriotism, example of, in Nehemiah, 177.

Paul, account of, 243.

—, character of, as illustrated by his Epistles, 247. 248. 251. 252. 254.

—, great subject of his preaching, 238.

—, see questions on the Epistles, 266.

Pentateuch, remarks on, 138. 5.

Pentecost, feast of, 129.

Periods, seven, in the Chronological Table, 270.

Peter, remarks on 1st and 2nd Epistles of, 261.

Pharisees, account of, 134.

Philemon, remarks on the Epistle to, 257.

Philippians, do. 251.

Philosophy, human, proof of its insufficiency to rescue man from idolatry, 96. 219. 246.

Prayer, the power of, 159.

—, the readiness of God to answer, 141.

—, instances of his refusing to answer, 12. 200.

Prayer to Christ, a distinguishing mark of being a Christian, 238.

—, for the right understanding and use of the Holy Scriptures, 137. 275.

Precepts of Scripture, on the interpretation of, 58.

—, not the purposes of God, the rules for our conduct, 67.

Pride, evil of, illustrated, 196.

Promises of Scripture, their practical use, 60. 159.

Prophecy, extent of, 27.

—, value of, as an evidence that the Bible is the word of God, 29.

—, interpretation of, 66.

—, moral use of those not immediately referring to Christ, 157. 170. 208.

Prophets, their twofold office, 193.

—, questions on, 219.

Proselytes, account of, 137.

Proverbs, remarks on book of, 189.

Providence of God in the preservation of the Bible, 6.

—, in the preservation of the family of David, 171.

—, in the preservation of the genealogy of our Lord, 173.

—, one leading object of the government of the Jews to illustrate the, 112.

—, on the interpretation of, 42. 206.

Psalms, remarks on book of, 37. 185.

—, probable occasions when written, 186.

Publicans, account of, 136.

Questions on the Divine authority of the Bible, 32.

—, the purpose for which God gave the Bible, 39.

—, the manner in which the truths of the Bible were revealed, 53.

—, the interpretation of the Bible, 110.

—, the government of the Jews, 119.

—, public worship, 120. &c.

—, adapted to the historical parts of the Old Testament, 179.

—, on the Prophets, 219.

—, on the Gospels, 282.

Questions on the character of our Lord, 232.

— on the Epistles, 266.

Relative duties, illustrations of, from Scripture, 148. 241.

— by what motives enforced, 59. 251.

Repentance, its insufficiency without an atonement, 49. 168.

Resurrection, doctrine of, shadowed out in the Old Testament, 47.

— of our Lord, 20.

— its effects on the Apostles, 21.

Revelation, change it has produced in England, 7.

— its necessity shown from the ignorance of mankind where it is not, 33. 96.

Revelation of St. John, remarks on, 268.

Rice, on the method of sowing, in Eastern countries, 103.

Ridley the Martyr, remark on Predestination, 108.

Righteous, some different senses in which used, 73.

Romans, remarks on the Epistle to, 245.

Ruth, remarks on the book of, 163.

Sabbath, account of, 127.

Sabbatical year, 117.

Sacrifice, remarks on, 49. 120. 142.

— animal, the distinguishing rite of revealed religion till the coming of Christ, 49.

Sadducees, their tenets and character, 185.

Salvation, illustration from the facts of the Old Testament of man's need of, 150. 162.

— nature of, illustrated by the historical parts of the Old Testament, 162.

— by Christ the great subject of the Bible, 36.

— danger of neglecting, 53. 101. 147. 231.

Samaritans, account of, 137.

Satan, remarks on the books of, 165.

Sandals and shoes, 100.

Scribes, account of, 183.

Secker, Archbishop, quoted, 38. 252.

Sees, Jewish, origin of, when and by whom, 132. 133.

Shekel, value of, 104.

Sin, liability of men to, 143. 154.

— folly, deceit, progress, evil of, 45. 144. 162. 171.

— God's judgments against, 155.

Song of Solomon, remarks on, 192.

Style of Scripture, 80. 109.

Synagogues, origin of, 127.

Tabernacles, feast of, 130.

Talmud, the term explained, 133.

Talents, value of, 104.

Temptation, definition of, 143.

Temple, account of, 126. 169.

Teraphim explained, 82.

Tillotson, Archbishop, on the interpretation of parables, quoted, 71.

Time, Jewish mode of computing, 103.

Timothy, remarks on the Epistles to, 255.

Titus, do. 256.

Thessalonians, do. 253.

Threatenings of Scripture, how they should be received, 61. 186.

Townson quoted, 53.

Tradition, its insufficiency, 33.

— of the elders, evil, of the belief of its divine authority, 134.

Travels, modern, illustrating Scripture, 97.

Trinity, doctrine of, in the Old Testament, 40.

— practical view of, 59.

Trumpets, feast of, 129.

Trust in God, David a remarkable instance of, 170.

Type, definition of, 49.

— rules for interpretation of, 67.

— use to be made of by us, 152.

Universal monarchies, the four referred to, 201. 272.

Urim and Thummim, the term explained, 83.

Venn, J., on the use to us of the types of the Old Testament, quoted, 68.

Virtue, counterfeit, 147.

— what alone is considered so in Scripture, 189.

Virtues, vices, on the development of, 148.

